

AN ACADEMIC COURSE ON SPIRITUAL FORMATION:
UNDERSTANDING, DEVELOPING, AND IMPLEMENTING A STRATEGY
FOR SPIRITUAL GROWTH OF STUDENTS
IN A CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

A THESIS
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DOCTOR OF MINISTRY

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To My Honeya...

I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing. If anyone does not remain in me, he is like a branch that is thrown away and withers; such branches are picked up, thrown into the fire and burned. If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish, and it will be given you. This is to my Father's glory, that you bear much fruit, showing yourselves to be my disciples.

- John 15:5-8

Oh, the depth of the riches of the wisdom and knowledge of God!
How unsearchable his judgments,
and his paths beyond tracing out!
"Who has known the mind of the Lord?
Or who has been his counselor?"
"Who has ever given to God,
that God should repay him?"
For from him and through him and to him are all things.
To him be the glory forever! Amen.

- Romans 11:33-36

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of the thesis-project is to understand the process of spiritual formation in order to develop and implement an academic course on spiritual formation that will help students to mature spiritually. Conclusions are drawn from a survey works on the critical factors that contribute to the process of spiritual formation. Spiritual formation is “being alive to God” and “being like God.” That is, a person undergoing spiritual formation grows in intimacy, love, devotion and knowledge of God and becomes more like God in his thoughts, emotions, desires and behavior. The basic factors in this process are: (1) what God has done for the believer (2) what God has made possible for him/her (based on what God has done for him/her) and (3) how a Christian responds to what God has done and made possible for him/her. These factors are rooted firmly in God’s sovereign grace. Not only does God make spiritual formation possible, He also works with His people as they go through the process of spiritual formation.

This two credit hour academic course on spiritual formation has been developed for undergraduate students at a Christian university in order to give them an understanding of the process and the nature of spiritual formation. Students will not only gain valuable knowledge regarding spiritual formation but also experience training that is critical for a lifestyle that makes spiritual formation possible. The course design was evaluated by several university faculty members who approved it “across the board.” The course will be proposed in the Spring of 2012 to be taught in the fall of 2012.

CHAPTER ONE

THE PROBLEM AND ITS SETTING: IMPOTENT CHRISTIANITY

Burning Questions

I distinctly remember the ache and the fire that burned in my heart as I was praying at a church youth service many years ago. I was repeating and praying a refrain from a Christian rock song that I heard that went:

I want to be a man like you-- but my heart won't face the task.
I want to be a man like you-- but I tremble when I ask.
Oh, the light that shines in darkness.
All that's good and true.
Take me from myself and make me new.
Because I want to be a man like you.¹

I still feel the heat and the ache as I write these words from the song. I so desperately want to be a man like Jesus. The desire and the hope have not diminished. This longing and prayer, however, have become a source of bewilderment and frustration since. Two sets of questions have remained unanswered: 1) how can I become a man like Jesus? How does this happen? What must I do to make it happen? Is it actually possible? 2) What does it mean to be like Jesus? What does it actually look like? What are appropriate goals and expectations that are realistic and achievable?

I did what I could do to be more like Jesus, but I often felt like a hypocrite. There was a gulf between the person that I projected to others and the person that I actually was. The desire to be holy and to please God often ended up with the mere pretense of holiness and spiritually maturity. It was not that my life of faith and attempts at holiness

¹ Greg X. Voltz, *River is Rising*, performed by Greg X. Voltz and others, dPulse Recording. CD. 1986.

were all a sham, but I felt that there was no genuine, lasting change in my life. My inner life was marked by guilt, dissatisfaction and confusion.

My quest was for change. It was for a real, lasting, and authentic change in my character and in my inner being that translated into a behavior and a lifestyle that reflected the likeness of Jesus. The real issue for me was not any lack of motivation or desire, but not being able to understand how Christians actually change. My question was regarding spiritual formation. Many Christian books, sermons, and Bible teachings urged me to follow Christ and to live a holy life, but very few of them actually helped me to understand *how* to live a holy life. Many books and sermons often offered bits and pieces of information regarding Christian spiritual growth, but I needed to see the whole picture. Typically, we are told to read the Bible, to pray, and to go to church. But, though I diligently read the Bible, prayed, and actively attended church, I still felt that there was no significant change in my character. I had a suspicion that most of the Christians around me who were doing the same were not living a life of intimacy and holiness as commanded in the Bible with God either.

It has become clear to me over the years that I have been deeply involved in the life of the church that I am not alone in this search. I have met many people in the church who are asking the same questions that I have asked for many years: *Can we really change? Can someone just sit us down and explain to us how we can change practically as Christians? What does the process look like and what does it involve? What are the factors that contribute to growth and how do they function? How do we overcome the grip of sin in our lives? What expectations are realistic, and what false assumptions must be let go?*

Case Studies

The case studies recorded here are based on actual people that I have met in the church, but I have altered their names and have made appropriate changes to respect their privacy. These individuals have faced questions about spirituality that are addressed here. These are not unfamiliar questions for believers.

Case Study 1: David

I met David when I was a freshman in high school. I had recently given my heart to Christ, and I was very involved in the church youth group. I approached David because, unlike his older sister who was more involved in the church, he appeared distant, closed and detached from the rest of the youth group. I asked him if he would be attending the summer youth retreat, and his response startled me. His response was:

I encountered God a couple of years ago during a similar retreat, and it was truly wonderful. I became very excited about being a Christian. But the feeling did not last, and I was back committing the same old sins and living the same old way as I did before meeting Christ. I tried hard to continue the life of faith, but I kept falling. I am now sick and tired of the rollercoaster ride, and I don't want to try any longer. I was involved in the church just like you. I experienced Christianity, and I found that it does not work. I decided not to believe in God anymore.²

His statement did not sound logical to me. Our failure to live good Christian lives does not logically lead us to conclude that God does not exist or to excuse us from following him. What impressed me was the emotional content of David's explanation. He did not want the rollercoaster ride anymore. That, I could understand. He was

² Interview with a student in a church youth group in New York, May, 1985.

disappointed in himself and in Christianity which had created an expectation in him that it could not fill. He expected his life to be different as a result of his religious experience with God. He had hoped that his commitment to Christ would have resulted in freedom from sin and a life characterized by love for God and others. The result? He ended up disappointed and cynical.

Case Study 2: Linda

Linda is an undergraduate student at a Christian university where I serve as chaplain. I came to know her through several counseling sessions that I had with her. Linda had grown up in a Christian home and was raised to believe in God, to live an upright life and to be faithful to her church. She had been active in the local church and also in the campus Christian discipleship group since coming to the university. In fact, she had been very, very active. This particular campus ministry was extremely rigorous, and required the members of this group to attend meetings and lectures every day of the week. Moreover, group members were required to take part in overseas outreach programs during the summer and winter vacations. She had participated on two missions trips and had served as worship leader of her team.

Linda came to me because she was confused, empty and unsure of her relationship with God in spite of all her involvement and rigorous training. Not only was she uncertain of her salvation, she could not even articulate what salvation in Christ actually meant to her. She was going through vigorous spiritual training but was lost as to the purpose of all that training. She felt that she did not really know God and that God

made no practical difference in her day to day living. She could not see herself ever leaving the church but hated the fact that her faith was superficial. She felt no joy. There was no meaning to her life. There was only duty. She wanted to experience God in her prayer; she desperately wanted to live in fellowship with God but feared that she was doomed to a superficial spirituality filled with meaningless activities.

Case Study 3: Jennifer

Jennifer is a professional in her late thirties. When she was a college student, she was excited about changing the world for Christ, was devoted to the study of God's word, and was preparing for lifelong service for God's glory. She led Bible study groups, went on short term mission trips and with her Christian friends sought God passionately. Since then, she became busy with her career, got married, and soon became a mother of two children.

Both Jennifer and her husband work hard in their professions, and they live in a large, luxurious six-bedroom house with a heated swimming pool. They host BBQs and pool parties for their friends from the church. They attend Sunday services faithfully and try to attend Bible study during the week. Many of the people from the church see them as role models. They believe in God, give to the church, participate in the weekly services and are viewed as nice people.

At times, Jennifer stays awake at night, grieving because she knows in her heart that God has become more and more marginalized in her life, in spite of the image she presents to her church community. She has become more concerned with remodeling the

house, paying off the mortgage, sending her kids to a nice private school, and getting ahead in her profession than truly loving God. This is not to say that one cannot be a wealthy professional with a family and love God at the same time. However, Jennifer knew that something was terribly wrong with her heart. She knew that she had settled. She had settled for a shallow Christianity that is worldly at the core.

Case Study 4: Maggie

Maggie had an amazing encounter with God in a charismatic revival meeting. She experienced the joy, freedom and love that she had never felt before. For the first time in her life, she felt special. Tears of joy flowed from her eyes as she professed her faith and renewed her commitment to Christ. By the end of the four-day revival meeting, Maggie had spoken in tongues, experienced being slain in the spirit, and had several people prophesy over her. She left the meeting filled with excitement for God and a renewed sense of purpose.

Her life seemed to have completely changed after these meetings. The impact of her extraordinary experience was such that she could not continue with her home church anymore. The leaders and the members of her church did not seem “spiritual” enough. They could not understand the power, the joy, and the excitement that she had experienced. Maggie grew increasingly critical of her church and began to feel spiritually “superior” to Christians who had never experienced what she had experienced. Maggie eventually left her church to join a more charismatic one. She felt that she needed to attend a more “spiritual” church, one that could help her to “really” grow in her faith.

As time went on, Maggie moved from one charismatic circle to another since her first encounter. She had many more charismatic experiences and became involved in various leadership roles and lay-ministry roles. Many people told her that she was truly gifted by God, especially in the area of healing and prophecy. She now holds regular “spiritual healing” prayer meetings at her home and travels to various places to lead such meetings.

The problem is that Maggie has become estranged from her husband and from her three children; actually, she has been absent from their lives for the past several years. They try to understand her, telling themselves that she is doing the “Lord’s work.” But at times they wonder if this is truly the will of God. They are confused by how such a “spiritual” and gifted woman of God can be so ill-tempered, hypocritical, judgmental, and self-centered. The fruit of the Spirit is something that does not characterize Maggie, but rather pride, fear, and manipulation. She has grown more unapproachable and unlikable since her “spiritual” experiences. To make the matter worse, Maggie appears completely closed to anyone who disagrees with her or tries to correct her. Actually, she has not had any spiritual authority over her for years and is convinced that she has a special relationship with God that other people simply cannot understand.

Case Study 5: Elder Kim

Sam Kim has been a fixture of the First Presbyterian Church for the past 40 years. He has been very active in the church leadership and has served as an elder of his church for the past 25 years. He has participated in every committee in the church and is now a

dominant voice in its decision-making process. Sam also serves as an influential board member of several local and regional Christian organizations, including a local Christian radio station and a Christian university. Sam boasts that he has personal relationships with most of the pastors in the area and feels he is well connected to all that is “Christian” in his community.

He has sat through countless services, listened to thousands of sermons, and chaired many, many committees. If someone were to ask him whether he was “saved” or not, Sam would be offended at the question. His response would be, “If I am not a Christian, then who is? Considering all that I have done for Christ and for the church, how can anyone ask such a question?”

And yet, his children and his wife pray for his salvation. They are convinced that with all his church experience, politics, meetings and accomplishments, Sam does not know God personally. He does not know the gospel of the cross of Jesus. He has never confessed his sins to God nor has he humbly come to God with his needs. The amazing grace that he sings about in the church has never amazed him.

Sam has a fierce temper and his family knows it all too well. In one particular evening, Sam had one of his violent episode, and his youngest son mustered a courage to confront him with a question, “Dad, what would Jesus think of how you are behaving?” Sam did not flinch at the question, but blurted out a response that revealed so much, “What does Jesus have to do with anything?”

Cast Study 6: Grace Fellowship Church

Grace Fellowship Church is a large church consisting of more than 7000 members. It is an influential church with a long and respectable history. The church has made the front page of the local newspaper recently, but it was not for something that the church was proud of. The article reported an ugly incident involving two assistant pastors physically assaulting the senior pastor. The assistant pastors had been angry with the senior pastor regarding their contracts, and their patience reached its limit when the senior pastor told the elder board not to renew the contracts. The assistant pastors stormed into the senior pastor's office one morning, shouting and accusing. The two assistant pastors locked the door when the senior pastor tried to leave and assaulted him.

The police were called. The senior pastor pressed charges against the assistant pastors, and the press had a field day over the story. Internet chat rooms were filled with searing criticism of the Grace Fellowship Church, in particular, and of Christianity, in general. The sad thing was that the conflict did not cease with the assault but continued in the media where both the senior pastor and the assistant pastors attacked each other. There was no remorse, no shame, no grace. And it was played out publicly for the whole world to see.

We can only imagine what non-Christians think about this affair. What has plagued the hearts of the church members is this: How can pastors who are supposed to be spiritual leaders and who teach the Word of God, display such shocking immaturity and lack of Christ-likeness? If our pastors are unable to live holy lives, what hope is there for the rest of us? What good is all the Bible knowledge, all the spiritual training if we

are no better than the rest of the world? Is there no grace to transform us?

Case Study 7: Ronald

Ronald is a Bible-believing, born again, evangelical, republican, middle-aged Christian. Ronald knows his Bible well. He can quote it, explain it, and discuss it all day long. Any conversations regarding the Bible or theology excite him, and he takes great delight in engaging in debates and discussions about them. He especially enjoys giving answers to those who have any questions about anything, especially questions related to Bible, life, and religion. He is well versed in theology, history and apologetics though he is not seminary trained. He has a natural gift and inclination for these things.

Ronald is especially passionate about correct interpretation and exposition of biblical texts. This is probably the reason why he feels that most preachers do not preach the Word of God properly and that their messages are watered down, or worse, heretical. There are only a few preachers he approves of, and, even then, Ronald will still criticize and correct their expositions.

Perhaps this critical spirit is related to his general inability to submit to any authority in the church. All of Ronald's previous pastors have had a difficult time with him, and were glad when he left their churches. Not only was Ronald outspoken in his criticism of their sermons, he expressed this criticism in a condescending manner. Ronald felt that none of these pastors could teach him nor lead him spiritually. At the very least, they were his equals, and Ronald often felt frustrated that they did not ask for his help in their ministries. Ronald wanted people to recognize his intellectual gifts, but very few

churches invited him to teach Bible studies or to lead their small groups. In fact, whenever he did teach or lead a group, only a few people attended and eventually disappeared.

Not many people enjoyed being with Ronald. More accurately, most people just tolerate him. Even with all his Bible knowledge and intellectual acuity, those around him do not go to him with their problems and prayers. He does not come across as gentle, wise, or loving, but as insecure and self-absorbed. One wonders how someone who knows so much about the Bible and is so well versed in orthodox doctrines can be so unlike Christ.

Crisis

I fear that there is a crisis in the spiritual formation of the church. The individuals described in these case studies are not uncommon in our churches today. The issue is not that these individuals exist, but that they are spiritually troubled, and their spiritual problems are unanswered. The enormous discrepancy between what the Bible says how Christians should live and how we actually live has become a norm in our contemporary churches. The gaping hole in our faith goes unnoticed. It does not bother us that we are not significantly different in our values and lifestyles from those who are not Christian. The difference between us and the world is superficial: we attend church on Sundays, use Christian expressions, and blush when we sin. The similarities are profound and deep. Divisions in the church, moral failing of Christian leaders, greed, pride, divorce, and overall sinfulness of Christian communities make us wonder if true change is really

possible.

Many Christians live and speak as if any serious pursuit of holiness and communion with God were for special Christians and not for ordinary believers. As for those who are serious about changing, they do not have a clear understanding of how to change. In fact, many do not even have a clear and adequate picture of what they should be aiming at. I am saddened by the thought that many Christians have become cynical about truly becoming Christ-like. They simply accept the lifestyle of “miserable sinner Christian”. The biblical call for holiness, intimacy with God, and the life of being filled with the Spirit is simply not a realistic option for them. They might have experienced some emotional or spiritual encounter with God, and, on occasion, be moved by good sermons, but by and large have given up on any real hope of becoming like Christ in this lifetime.

People assume that pastors, the spiritual leaders of the church, need to be spiritually mature, exhibit greater Christ-likeness and live holy personal and public lives. I was a bit surprised when I entered the seminary with expectations of being trained in holiness and spiritual growth. Seminaries offer many courses related to Bible exegesis, original languages, history, theology, preaching and ministry skills, but it is difficult to find a seminary that actually trains men and women for holy living. Graduates have a great deal of knowledge about Christianity but may have no clue as to how to grow in the love of God nor know how to help others to do so. “Seminaries are cemeteries,” I heard someone joke. It is not funny that a person’s passion, faith and love for Jesus can actually fade away in a seminary under the pressure of academics presented apart from worship,

discipleship, and intimacy with God.³ Seminarians graduate and then discover that much of their seminary training does not address the actual needs of the people they will be serving. How do they learn to deal with sin, pain, and doubt?

Many pastors feel inadequate when it comes to holiness. They themselves do not know how to change in order to live out a Spirit-filled life as described in the Bible. They have insights related to spiritual formation, but these insights are often disjointed and fragmented in their minds and they are, thus, ineffectual in their ministries. Most churches have worship services focusing on the preaching of the word, but very few offer adequate spiritual counseling for their congregation. How do people grow in the likeness of Christ?

The situation may be worse. Perhaps pastors, by and large, are not even interested in spiritual formation. Spiritual formation is too mysterious; it is difficult and subtle. It does not seem to pay off. It is much more productive and gratifying to focus on *numbers*: the number of people who attend the services, the number of missionaries that the church supports, the number of people who are converted to Christianity, the number of books written, the amount in the church building fund. Spiritual formation is too slow, messy, and unmanageable.⁴

Inadequate Approaches to Spiritual Formation

No matter what is going on in the church, spiritual formation is still the ‘heart-

³ There may be some seminaries that may do well in equipping pastors in the area of spiritual formation, and not all seminarians may feel that their passion for God suffered by the seminary experiences. But I wanted to point out that this is a real issue among many seminarians, nonetheless.

⁴ There are pastors faithfully attending to the spiritual formation of God’s people, but unfortunately, I believe that they are the minority. The majority of the churches that I have come to know both here in the States and in Korea fit the description given here.

cry' of every true Christian. Among the contemporary Christians the three typical approaches are inadequate and contribute to disappointment and disillusionment for those who seek true transformation.

The first approach I call a "magical" approach to spiritual formation. Here a person seeks an event or experience that will magically result in instantaneous holiness. A.W. Tozer describes such Christianity as "instant Christianity," where Godly desires, lifestyles and characters are formed instantly by some spiritual experiences. This is not all foreign to us who live in an instant society where we are used to instant coffee, fast food, digital cameras, liposuction, and online shopping.⁵ There are many who believe that if they find the "right" experience, they will be transformed painlessly and swiftly into different sort of people who reflects God's holiness.

I have met many sincere Christians who believe that if they go on the "right" mission trip, attend a seminary, pray at a revival meeting, or even complete a rigorous discipleship program, then they will be changed. These events may do some good for people's spiritual lives, but they are not, by themselves, the substance of a godly life. These events may even harm believers' growth if they are mistaken for the normal biblical process of spiritual formation.⁶ These events may mislead Christians to have a false sense of maturity and keep them in a state of illusion, self-deception, and pride.

Many also mistakenly believe that if they have certain "spiritual," "charismatic" or emotional experiences, they will have godliness and instant change. Assuming that these experiences are genuine and they contribute positively to a person's spiritual journey, such experiences are not in themselves the substance of godly lives either. John

⁵ A.W. Tozer, *That Incredible Christian: How Heaven's Children Live On Earth*. (Camphill, Pennsylvania: Wingspread Publishing, 1977), 17ff.

⁶ I will describe the 'normal biblical process of spiritual formation' later in this paper.

White calls that these charismatic experiences (which he favors) “temporary sanctifying spinoffs, but they do not sanctify.”⁷ Charismatic experiences may empower, heal and encourage believers, but they do not make us holy. We ought not to mistake the empowering ministry of the Holy Spirit for His sanctifying ministry.

The second inadequate approach to spiritual formation is expressed by a person who believes that he will grow in holiness automatically once he becomes a Christian. He says to himself, “in due time, somewhere in the future, I will be like Christ.” He thinks this will just happen, somehow. Because he believes this, no active learning or spiritual training is required. He says to himself, “If I go on just as I have been, I will become holy soon or later.”

The problem with this view is that there are too many Christians who have been in churches for a long time and have not grown spiritually. The growth does not come automatically. It is not difficult to find unholly, sin-ridden and mean-spirited Christians who have been active in the church for years. Besides, there is no biblical support to believe that one will be transformed automatically into a godly person simply by passing of time.⁸ It is one thing to say that spiritual formation is a slow, life-long process, but it is something quite different to say that spiritual formation is inevitable and automatic. This sort of mindset will perpetuate unfruitful Christian lifestyle and will encourage ignorance and spiritual complacency.

Another inadequate approach to spiritual formation is the emphasis in spiritual growth on human activities. This approach is exemplified in people who are constantly involved in the activities of the church; exerting considerable energy and time results in

⁷ John White, *The Pathway of Holiness: A Guide for Sinners*. (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1996), 91.

⁸ I am not referring to glorification at the final return of Christ as described in 1 John 3:2, but spiritual formation that happens in this life time.

being a good Christian. Such a person believes that her spiritual condition is determined by her own efforts and accomplishments. She considers this the way to become the person that God has called her to be. The key to spiritual formation, in this view, is denial, discipline, and determination. What is required is “more”: more Church services, more Bible studies, more prayer meetings, and more commitment.

The problem, again, is that we meet many Christians who are thus committed to an active life in the church but are not themselves Christ-like. They are very religious; they give off an air of holiness, but it is a holiness that is condescending and stale. The person’s entire spiritual well-being has been based on human effort, and it is therefore natural for him to equate spiritual immaturity with laziness. Such a person feels superior or inferior to others depending on his performance. It is also hard for him to be joyful and to be at peace since his entire spirituality, identity, and standing in the faith community depend on his achievements.

He has to be serious, because he is afraid. He is afraid because the kind of change that he desires cannot be produced by mere human effort. He can effect superficial changes and put up a front, but the change of the heart and affections are beyond his direct control. This approach to spiritual formation is therefore guilt-producing and prone to hypocrisy and self-deception. It cannot produce true godliness. So, when he fails, he either has to reject his entire spirituality built on self-righteousness or he has to lie. Lying to others is hypocrisy; lying to self is self-deception. Unwittingly, fear and pride wind up being the engine of his spirituality rather than the love and the grace of our savior.

The biblical approach to spiritual formation contains elements of these three

approaches described above. God does use various events and experiences to contribute to spiritual formation. The process of spiritual formation is also slow and necessitates active human participation. Spiritual formation, however, is not magical, automatic, or man-made. This paper will put forth an approach to spiritual formation that evolves throughout life and is biblical, theologically cogent, effective, and practical.

Ministry Setting: A Christian University

The current thesis proposes an academic course on spiritual formation to be taught at a Christian university. The purpose of Christian higher education is the integration of faith and learning so that students are able to understand and to live out every area of their lives with a mindset and values informed by a Christian worldview.⁹ The Christian conception of education is much broader and deeper than merely imparting knowledge and skills; it involves the education of the whole person in such a way that his ideas, emotions, values, desires, actions, and relationships are shaped by God's revealed truth. True Christian education is holistic and formational. What we teach our students will inevitably influence how they live and what they love.

An academic course on spiritual formation is necessary for Christian universities. For a curriculum designed to educate the whole person through Christian worldview, it is indispensable to have a course that will focus on the actual process of change and growth. The course of spiritual formation will seek to vitally connect the content of Christian worldview with actual lives of the students so that the student's faith will be integrated to

⁹ David Dockery, *Renewing Minds: Serving Church and Society through Christian Higher Education* (Nashville, Tennessee: B&H Publishing Group, 2008), 5.

the rest of their lives.

I am presently developing a course on spiritual formation for Handong Global University (HGU), a Christian university located in South Korea. The university was founded in 1995 with the motto, “Why not change the world?” From its inception the founders of the university envisioned a Christian university that will equip Christian leaders to change the world for the Kingdom of God. In order to produce Christian leaders who will change the world, the university has sought to offer a well-developed curriculum that emphasizes character-building, and to teach students to participate in social services. In addition, the founders structured the academic program to emphasize English proficiency, computer skills, and team-work in order to prepare the students for a rapidly changing world. As a result, HGU has become a very successful university in Korea. It is recognized as a leading university that is significantly influencing higher education in Korea.¹⁰

With its advantage of being a young university, HGU is free to be creative, daring, and single-hearted. It does not have the burden of a traditional past but is characterized by excitement, idealism, and a sense of dedication to a vision. Both faculty and students initially came to HGU dreaming of an uncompromising Christian university that will be used by God to impact the world for Christ. Many have even referred to HGU as the hope of the Korean evangelical church.

The down-side of being a young university is that HGU has not had enough time to develop its infrastructure to carry out its vision. HGU’s rapid growth resulted in uneven growth. Some aspects about HGU are exemplary and remarkable while others are

¹⁰ Phyllis Young-Ae Kim, *The Papyrus Basket Conspiracy: The School in the Wilderness* (XulonPress, 2006). Refer to this work by Phyllis Kim for a detailed history of Handong Global University.

still immature and lacking. One of the areas that needs continual improvement is the academic program that deals with “Faith and Christian Worldview.” In 2007, the Center for Christian Foundation (CCF) was created to oversee and develop this portion of the academic program.¹¹

The program outcome for CCF is as follows:

Table 1.1. Program Outcome for Center for Christian Foundations

<p>1. Each student will demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of the Old and New testaments of the Bible in regards to its importance, authority, authorship, inspiration, message, structure, and overall theological flow.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Students will be able to demonstrate an adequate knowledge regarding the importance, authority, authorship, inspiration, translations and interpretation of the Bible b. Students will be able to display a basic knowledge of the 66 books of the Bible in terms of their historical and literary context. c. Students will be able to give an adequate account of the overall storyline and the theology of the OT and NT, including the NT fulfillment of the OT expectations.
<p>2. Each student will demonstrate a basic knowledge and understanding of Christianity as to Christian doctrines, comparative religion, and apologetics.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Students will be able to articulate major Christian doctrines from the evangelical perspective. b. Students will be able to discern non-evangelical teachings and be able to defend Christian positions. c. Students will be able to articulate fundamental differences between Christian faith and other world religions and be able to promote Christian faith.
<p>3. Each student will exit the program with the ability to understand and to respond to all aspect of life through the perspectives of Christian Worldview.</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Students will complete the program with the ability to address major life-questions from a Christian Worldview, including the questions regarding the creation/evolution discussion. b. Students will demonstrate a basic understanding of contemporary society, world history and world missions from a Christian Worldview. c. Students will be able to approach all aspects of all academia from a Christian Worldview.
<p>4. Each student will be able articulate a vision for their lives rooted in the Christian</p>

¹¹ It is to be noted that every academic course in every area of academia is related to faith. CCF seeks to oversee those courses that teach foundations of Christian faith and worldview.

Worldview and to put into practice an exemplary life of faith and show application to his/her personal, professional, and social life.

- a. Each student will practice personal devotional life in regards to:
 - Spiritual formation, Spiritual disciplines
 - Stewardship of Time, money, leisure, and relationships
- b. Each student will have a basic understanding of work, family, societal involvement, church, missions and ethics from Christian worldview perspective.
- c. Each student will exit the program having formulated personal faith statement and vision statement

The following courses are currently offered in the CCF program:

Table 1.2. Courses Offered by the Center for Christian Foundations

CCF Courses	
9 required.	
A. Required	Christian Foundations 1: Biblical Understanding 2 Credits
B. Required	Christian Foundations 2: Theological Understanding 2 Credits
C. Choose 1	Creation and Evolution 2 Credits Mission Perspective 2 Credits Christian Worldview 2 Credits
D. Electives	Faith and learning I 3 Credits Faith and Learning II 3 Credits Christianity and Modern thought 3 Credits Church History 3 Credits Modern World and Missions 3 Credits Special Topics in CCF 3 Credits - Apologetics - Romans

The initial assessment of this current CCF curriculum design, in view of its program outcome, has revealed a weakness in the areas of life applications and spiritual formation.¹² While there is an earnest effort to educate students in the areas of Bible, theology, and Christian worldview, there is no course that is designed to equip students to understand the basics of spiritual formation, i.e. to give them a framework to live the life of faith and to grow spiritually. This is a serious deficiency in the CCF program.

¹² Center for Christian Foundation, *A Proposal for Curriculum Revision*. (Pohang: HGU, 2011), 191-192.

Developing a course to fulfill this need is essential.

It is also acknowledged that proposing an academic course on spiritual formation is only a small response to the larger crisis that has been described above. However, I believe that working through the process can be a viable response to the crisis. It is one way of addressing questions that many Christians face regarding their faith. We should also realize that offering one academic course on spiritual formation will not ensure actual growth and change in all the students who take the course. But it is my conviction that it will greatly contribute to the faith life of students who are sincerely searching for and desiring a life in Christ.

A two credit-hour academic course on spiritual formation will be developed for undergraduate students at a Christian university. The course will be designed to be taught over a 16-week semester. The course will aim to teach students the proper understanding of the vision and the process of Christian spiritual formation. Students will also be given an appropriate theological framework to view spiritual formation in light of the larger salvation history. Students will not only gain a conceptual knowledge of the factors that contribute to spiritual formation, but will also begin to apply disciplines related to their personal spiritual growth.

It is to be noted that the current thesis focuses on developing the course, not actually teaching it. The evaluation for the project, therefore, will involve several of my colleagues evaluating the syllabus and the course design. A more complete evaluation of the effectiveness of the course will be made in the future as a part of an on-going assessment done by the university, but it is not a part of this thesis.

CHAPTER TWO

HELP ALONG THE WAY: LITERATURE THAT OFFERS INSIGHT INTO THE VISION, THE NATURE, AND THE PROCESS OF SPIRITUAL FORMATION

Since I started my inquiry, I have been fortunate enough to find some help along the way from various authors regarding the nature and the process of spiritual formation. Some offer general teaching regarding the process of spiritual formation, while others contribute specific insights. The twelve thinkers considered here are basic to my thesis. While each offers something essential to the thesis, the first seven help form the basic and cardinal perspectives necessary for approaching the topic of spiritual formation. The last five present insights that deal more directly with the topic of spiritual formation in specific ways.

Jonathan Edwards

Introduction to Edwards

Jonathan Edwards' classic *Religious Affections: How Man's Will Affects His Character Before God*¹ is a work that has contributed to the core of my understanding of the nature of spiritual formation. What Edwards offers is the concept of "religious affections" which is the key to understanding the very goal of spiritual formation. Before dealing with questions related to *how* one changes, there must be a basic understanding of

¹ Jonathan Edwards, *Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections* (1808; Abridged edition, *Religious Affections: How Man's Will Affects His Character Before God*, Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1984).

what it means to change. Before proceeding with any discussion relating to the process and the methods of spiritual formation, this is needed, and this is what Edwards states so clearly. His thoughts on the importance and the critical place of affections will be discussed here, followed by discussions of new affections, false affections, and true affections. The section will conclude with three appropriate responses to the new affections that Edwards prescribes.

Religious Affections Explained

For Edwards, the two basic faculties of the soul are understanding and inclination. Not only do we think, believe, know, and understand certain things, but we also have inclinations toward or away from them. In fact, we do not merely think, but we also hate or love that which we think. These are the inclinations of the soul, and Edwards refers to them as “affections.”² This insight seems so obvious that it often goes unnoticed. But it is at the heart of our relationship with God and is crucial to our understanding of the nature of true spiritual formation. Spiritual formation must go deeper than having correct doctrines or doing right; it must have an impact on what we love, hate, believe, and do. Spiritual formation, at the heart, is based on our inclinations, on what we truly love or hate and choose as the basis of our actions and relationships.

The Importance of Affections

In the final analysis, our lives will be shaped by what we love. Affections

² Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 5-8.

undergird our fears, joys, choices, thoughts, and relationships. Unless there are changes in our affections, there will be no true, lasting, and significant change in our character. Indeed, “no change of a religious nature will ever take place unless the affections are moved.”³ The aim of Edwards’ Biblical spiritual formation focuses on not having mere occasional feelings, actions or thoughts, but having sustained, characteristic affections that shape and influence them in a consistent way.

The importance of affections cannot be overemphasized. St. Augustine is echoed in Edwards’ emphasis on the importance of affections when he said, “Love God and do whatever you please: for the soul trained in love to God will do nothing to offend the One who is Beloved.”⁴ True religious affection is the source of Christian freedom.⁵ It enables the believer to do what he/she deeply wants - to love God. There is no contradiction between duty and delight in this. The freedom that comes from true affection is internal. True religious affection is the antidote to ‘miserable sinner Christianity’ which is marked by the spirit of legalism. We cannot please God without true affections, because affection is fundamental to any genuine and lasting relationship. It cannot be legislated.

Edwards then shows how affections are stressed in the Scriptures. The language is different but the source is the same: “fear of the Lord,” “hope in the Lord,” “rejoicing in the Lord,” “hate what is evil,” as well as expressions of joy and trust, sorrow, and gratitude. A survey of the psalms, for example, reveals that affection is at the heart of the psalmist’s relationship to God and colors all his prayers. Major Biblical figures, such as David, Paul, and Jesus display deep affection in their relationship with God. This is

³ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 10.

⁴ St. Augustine, *Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers: First Series: Vol. VII- St. Augustine: Gospel of John, First Epistle of John and Soliloquies*, ed. Philip Schaff (New York: CosimoBooks 2007), 504.

⁵ “True affection” or “True religious affections” will be used to denote a person’s affection towards God that comes from God.

inseparable from the person's character and deepest yearnings and are not temporary phenomena; they are intensified through eternity. The greatest commandment, a response to God's love, is that we are to love Him with all our heart, soul, mind and strength. At the same time, we are to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.

The Source of New Affections

How can love be commanded? How is true affection possible? The source of true affection, according to Edwards, is God.⁶ God provides what he commands. He is both the source and the goal of true human lives. Only God is able to give a human being a spiritual rebirth, a new nature, an understanding of His goodness, and a new affection for Himself. The Holy Spirit's ministry -- planting God's word, renewing of the heart and influencing the believer-- is the key factor that makes true affection for God possible.⁷ Edwards reasons that "The Spirit of God is given to the true saints to dwell in them, as his proper lasting abode and to influence their hearts, as a principle of new nature or as a divine supernatural spring of life and action."⁸

Spiritual formation is, thus, rooted in salvation in Christ through the ministry of the Holy Spirit. This is possible only because of God's grace. True affection, therefore, cannot be manufactured, manipulated, or achieved by mere human effort. It is the result of God's wisdom. Only the power of God can change the nature of a human soul that is bent on rejecting Him as God. Genuine conversion is necessary at the very core of our nature. This is the good news. What we really need and cannot earn on our own, God

⁶ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 78-80.

⁷ James 1:18, 21.

⁸ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 85.

offers freely in Christ. God gives us His righteousness and His presence with a new heart, and freedom to love and to know Him. This grace is the foundation for all spiritual formation.

The Possibility of False Affections

Edwards is not naïve in regards to the human capacity for deception and self-deception. While it is true that human beings cannot themselves produce true religious affections, they can deceive others and themselves into believing that they do have a true affection for God. To support this view, Edwards lists the false signs of true religious affections. Much talk about God and spiritual experiences are not true signs, nor are emotional or charismatic experiences.⁹ Because spiritual formation can be counterfeited, we need to understand what the signs of true affections are.

Characteristics of True Affections

At the heart of true affections lies the ability to love God for Himself.¹⁰ The primary reason why a Christian comes to God is not because he finds God useful, but because he finds God lovely. What the Christian desires above all else is God Himself, is fellowship with God. He simply loves loving God. Obedience, therefore, comes “naturally” since it flows out of love, not mere external duty. Such love for God comes from God, and cannot be fabricated by human effort. False Christians approach God for

⁹ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 33ff.

¹⁰ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 91.

what they get from Him. Such spirituality is rooted in self-love and cheapens man's relationship with God, resulting in anger and counterfeit gratitude. God becomes then only a means to an end, and that is idolatry, not faith.¹¹

True religious affections, the result of the work of the Holy Spirit, can be seen in a new desire, appreciation, and love for God's own beauty and holiness. This love is not "useful" per se, but those who love God for Himself do so because God is beautiful and holy. God has become for them the end for which everything exists. This is the true believer.

However, when suffering and life's disappointments come, false Christians fall away from God because the basis of their faith, God's benefits, is gone. In pain there is no longer a basis for them to remain with God. Suffering exposes their closed heart. True Christians, on the other hand, cannot separate themselves from God no matter what happens to them. They confess along with David, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me."¹² The only misfortune that can befall them is the loss of the presence of God, and that is something that will never happen.

¹¹ James M. Houston, *The Mentored Life: From Individualism to Personhood*. (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 2002), 156-159. James Houston cites St. Bernard who points out three stages in loving God. The first stage is loving God for his benefits. We come to know God who offers many benefits, we find that we love God for God himself. This is the second stage. The third stage is realizing that we love God for God with God's own love, and thereby learn to rely on God's grace to love Him. So, there is a place in a true Christian life when the Christian will love God for God's benefits. However if a person loves God only for the benefits and never come to love God for God, I must conclude that this love is self-love and does not display true affection at all.

¹² Psalm 23:4.

Appropriate Responses to the New Affections

The core of Biblical spiritual formation is a life of attentiveness to true affection that is divine in origin and nature. This divine affection, from God and sustained by God, is *our* affections, and it must be nurtured. It is this awareness that accepts the Biblical approach to spiritual formation to be humble, dependent, and confident.

Humility

Edwards writes, “Humility, then, is the most essential thing in true religion.”¹³ Humility flows from the fact that the focus of the believer’s love and faith is not himself but God. God is the source and the goal for his existence. “Self” is not on the throne, but God is. Such a person does not compare himself with others; he does not speak much of himself or of his experiences; he does not have his own goodness, but rather he will lament over his sinfulness.¹⁴ True affections flow from a humble heart.

Confidence

A Christian’s confidence is the natural result of humble reliance on God’s provision and promises. If confidence rests in one’s own goodness and efforts, it cannot be maintained. However, if confidence rests in God’s goodness, then, that is both reasonable and humble. Indeed, Edwards stresses the point:

¹³ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 128.

¹⁴ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 130-131.

Gracious affections come from those operations and influences which are truly spiritual, and partake of the divine nature. Christ lives in the heart and the Holy Spirit dwells there in union with the faculties of the soul as an internal, vital principle that exerts God's own proper nature. This is why true grace has such active power and efficacy. If God dwells in the heart and is vitally united to it, He will show that He is God by the efficacy of His operation. For Christ is not dead but alive.... Thus every saint is a subject of the benefit of Christ's suffering and is made to know and experience the power of His resurrection.¹⁵

Such strong certainty in God's grace and in His Word governs a Christian's practice and conscience. True affections lead to holy living.

Dependence

Since true religious affections are rooted in love for God and for his beauty and holiness, Edwards maintains that a true Christian actually feeds on God's beauty and His holiness. He is formed and sustained by God's Word which illuminates the heart and mind to perceive that what is holy is beautiful and delightful. The Christian is dependent on God's Word to nourish and to direct his heart. This is what the Word of God does: it gives true knowledge characterized by spiritual appreciation, discernment, love, awe, and delight in the beauty of God's revealed Word. The true Christian's spiritual duties, therefore, are to delight himself in the Lord, to behold the beauty of God, and to direct his heart and mind to God's Word. God's word will, then, heighten true affections toward God. The more the Christian delights in God, the more he will desire to delight in God, and the more he will hate sin and desire to hate sin.

¹⁵ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 169.

John Piper

Introduction to Piper

John Piper, in his book *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*, echoes Jonathan Edwards and builds on his insights.¹⁶ J.I. Packer comments on Piper's book: "The healthy biblical realism of this study in Christian motivation comes as a breath of fresh air. Jonathan Edwards, whose ghost walks through most of Piper's pages, would be delighted with his disciple."¹⁷ The basis of *Desiring God* is true religious affection as previously described by Edwards: that God is truly delightful and will satisfy human soul like nothing else. The pleasure of God is better than what anyone has expected; and it satisfies the hungry soul. God is its greatest joy.¹⁸

Piper's *Desiring God* is, indeed, relevant to our understanding of spiritual formation. He clarifies for us the vision for true spiritual formation and also offers us a key paradigm to understand its nature. Loving God is not only the very *aim* of true spiritual formation; it is also the very *way* of true spiritual formation. Every aspect of daily Christian life, when viewed through the paradigm of "desiring God," becomes clear. Conversion is no longer merely adopting a new religion but a new birth leading to a life-transforming relationship with the living God. Worship is no longer merely attending church and sitting through a service but is heart-felt contrition, wonder, surrender, gratitude, passion, and satisfaction. The word of God is no longer a mere source of

¹⁶ John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*, (Sisters, Oregon,, Multnomah Books 1986).

¹⁷ Piper, *Desiring God*, Back page.

¹⁸ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 163-164.

intellectual knowledge and ethics but is the living word of God that fuels obedience, delight, and humility in fellowship with God. It transforms how we view marriage, money, missions, as well as all human misery. Everything is viewed and lived in the light of our loving God.

Desiring God and the Glory of God

Piper further stresses the point that God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in Him.¹⁹ We glorify God by loving Him, delighting in Him, and desiring Him. In other words, one cannot glorify God without true affections. What God desires from us is love, and our love for God glorifies Him the most. Piper develops this idea further by modifying the answer to the first question of the Westminster shorter catechism into “Man’s chief end is to glorify God by enjoying Him forever.”²⁰ Not only is it good and glorifying to delight in God, it is the chief purpose of our existence.

Since the purpose of our lives is to glorify God, and God is most glorified when we are most satisfied in Him, then it follows that the fundamental duty and mandate for our lives is to delight ourselves in God. This is why Piper refers to himself as a Christian hedonist. The rationale and the origin of the Christian hedonist’s pursuit of pleasure are not in himself, but in God’s glory and in God’s commands. A Christian hedonist, Piper argues, is neither self-centered nor pleasure-centered but intensely God-centered. Every aspect of his life, including worship, marriage, and money, relates to and is colored by his

¹⁹ Piper, *Desiring God*, 137.

²⁰ G.I. Williamson, *The Westminster Shorter Catechism: For Study Classes*, 2nd Ed. (Phillipsburg, NJ: P&P Publishing Co., 2003), 1. What Piper has done is to show the relationship between these two elements of chief end of man. These are not two separate things, but they are one and the same. God is glorified by our enjoyment of him. The shorter catechism states, “Man’s chief end is to glorify God and to enjoy him forever.”

desire for God.

Eugene Peterson

Introduction to Peterson

When considering questions related to spiritual formation, we may expect healthy discussions on techniques, strategies, and skills that will help us to achieve the spiritual growth that we desire. I believe that there is a proper place for such considerations, but what is more urgent is to have an appropriate attitude towards cultivating a right relationship with the living God and which is at the heart of Biblical spiritual formation. Eugene Peterson's *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction*²¹ and *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity*²² contribute significantly to forming such an attitude.

These two works were chosen since they are specially written for pastors whose vocation involves spiritual formation of their congregants. The major contribution of Peterson to this topic, which I will refer to as "humble spirituality,"²³ will be presented in the discussion of *Working the Angles*. Then, Peterson's elaboration of "humble spirituality" in the *Contemplative Pastor* will be explored.

²¹ Eugene H. Peterson, *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989).

²² Eugene H. Peterson, *Working the Angles: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity*. (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987).

²³ Peterson himself does not use the phrase, 'humble spirituality'. After reading through the works of Eugene Peterson, this is the phrase that I thought best summarizes his approach to spirituality.

Humble Spirituality

Peterson, in *Working the Angles*, warns us against the ‘Promethean attitude’ that is so prevalent in our culture and in our churches. It echoes the human condition in which we use technology to master the earth, our lives, and our destinies. Like Prometheus, our optimism is blind; we are driven to achieve, to possess, and to experience. At the same time, we suppress the knowledge of our own limitations and of our inevitable death. Humanity has technology but no self-knowledge and claims to be free and immortal, but it is actually living in chains, crushed under the burden of the world, destined for doom, and living in denial and illusion.²⁴ Christians seek to master their spirituality by prescribing “10 steps to church growth” or “5 ways to spiritual fulfillment” making promises for a quick and painless spiritual transformation. The issue is not whether these “10 steps” work or not, but rather whether the mindset behind such an approach is spiritual. As a matter of fact, it is not. It is human-centered, blind to reality, and blind to God. As such, it can be not only dangerous, but also tempting for those whose work is spiritual formation.

In opposition to the Promethean mindset, Peterson prescribes a “humble spirituality.” This is an approach to life during which we learn to see that we are not the center of the reality, but that God is the center of it all. We learn that we are not the main actors, but God is. God has been present before we came onto the scene, and He will continue to be there after we are long gone. This is an admission of our place in the world. We are not in charge; we are not God. In the next step, after initial misgivings and protests, we come to realize that this is wonderful news. We get God. Never competent to

²⁴ Peterson, *Working the Angle*, 28-31.

run the universe, we are now free to leave that to God. We become receivers who learn and are led through life. We are free to see the obvious: God is great! God is here! God is God.

Humbly, then, we develop an approach to life that is attentive to God, to others, and to the world. Such spiritual formation that is marked by honesty, wonder, openness, quietness, and prayer, is attentive. It listens, watches, and waits, rather than taking control and worrying.

Characteristics of Humble Spirituality

In *Contemplative Pastor*, Peterson stresses three words that characterize such humble spirituality: unbusy, subversive, and apocalyptic.²⁵ He also introduces the concept of “middle voice” that further describes a life characterized by humble spirituality.

Unbusy

A humble person must cultivate “unbusyness” if he is to pay attention to God. It is a life rhythm in which all of his activities and relationships flow. According to Peterson, the actual reasons for busyness are simply laziness and vanity. Laziness makes us procrastinate, and vanity makes us too busy. The humble person makes space for God in mind, time, and heart. He is careful not to crowd his day with many activities but guards his heart to be able to listen to God. “Unbusyness” is the humble recognition of the living

²⁵ Peterson, *Contemplative Pastor*, 16.

God who walks with us. He knows that what is truly important and urgent is not to achieve much but to be with Him and obey Him.

Subversive

The humble person who has submitted to God's kingdom has to live his life on earth as a subversive. Peterson explains, "I am undermining the kingdom of self and establishing the Kingdom of God. I am being subversive."²⁶ He understands that there is more to this life than what our prevailing culture conceives. He believes that there is another kingdom that will swallow our current way of existence. The humble person sees himself as a servant of the coming king as he lives in this world. He seeks not to promote himself, or to manipulate his surroundings to serve his ambitions, but, rather, he faithfully and patiently serves God's agenda in the everyday.²⁷

Apocalyptic

Humble spirituality is unrushed, quiet, and extraordinarily ordinary. The humble person is not interested in accomplishing "great and mighty things" because he knows that nothing is as great and as mighty as the One with whom he converses, loves, and follows daily. He knows "the greatest and the mightiest" has already broken in and everything will change in due time. God is active in our midst. Therefore, such a humble person is radically apocalyptic. He is apocalyptic since he anticipates the transformation

²⁶ Peterson, *Contemplative Pastor*, 27.

²⁷ Peterson, *Contemplative Pastor*, 27ff.

of himself and of everything in this world. He perceives every event, every relationship, and every routine in the larger context of eternity. An apocalyptic, humble person is therefore free to be earthy, to be awake in the ordinary, and to appreciate what God is doing in this world.²⁸

Middle Voice

Humble spirituality is not centered on human initiative, planning, and busyness, but is centered on God's initiative, leadership, and provision. According to Peterson, such spirituality is neither active nor passive; it is lived out in the "middle voice."²⁹ Active spirituality tends to focus on ourselves in taking the lead, determining what we should do, and relying on our efforts and resources to achieve what we have set out to achieve. Passive spirituality, on the other hand, is marked by apathy, non-involvement, and a general lack of expectation with regards to spiritual formation.

Peterson presents the "middle voice" as the appropriate response to God's work in our lives. It is described as "being actively involved in that which is done to you."³⁰ Here, God is the main actor in our spiritual formation, but we, also, are to be fully involved in what God is doing in us and around us. Although we are not in control, we are not removed from the process, but are called to be fully attentive, receptive, and obedient to God in His work. The call is for us to make space and time for God who alone can reform and transform our inner beings.

The concept of the "middle voice" made a significant contribution to the process

²⁸ Peterson, *Contemplative Pastor*, 39ff.

²⁹ Peterson, *Contemplative Pastor*, 102-105.

³⁰ Peterson, *Contemplative Pastor*, 103.

of spiritual formation. The *aim* of spiritual formation is to be the kind of person who can become humble, attentive, and obedient to God. The *way* of spiritual formation is also the same: we are to become the person that God calls us to be by paying attention, waiting, and listening to God who forms our hearts. Humble spirituality shows us both the way and the destination of true spiritual formation.

Insights into the “Normal” Christian Practices

Peterson does not offer any new techniques or activities to help us grow spiritually. What he offers, however, are insights into four “normal” Christian practices: scripture reading, prayer, spiritual care, and Sabbath-keeping which are crucial in order for us to be truly formed by God.

Scripture Reading

With regards to the Scriptures, Peterson calls us to humbly *listen* to the Word. He distinguishes between Scripture reading and listening. Reading can be done anytime, anywhere. The reader is in control of the reading. Listening, however, cannot be done anytime, anywhere. The listener is not in control of the listening. The one speaking has to be present for the listening to happen. Listening must be relational, while reading need not be. In this, Peterson is giving us a humble and correct attitude toward Scripture reading.³¹ We are to read in order to listen to God who is present. This is the “middle voice” reading of the Word: we are to be actively participating in that which is done in us.

³¹ Peterson, *Working the Angles*, 88.

We present ourselves to the Word; to read, to meditate, to memorize, and to pray in order to enter in. We are to enter into the world of the Scriptures and allow our minds and imaginations to be shaped by the Word in humble expectation that it is there that God will meet us, speak to us, and be in fellowship with us.

Prayer

Prayer, according to Peterson, is never the first word. It is always second. God's word is always the first; God's word is always previous. Our prayer is not primarily an address to God, but a response to God who has already spoken -- to God who is already there.³² This is the humble and Biblical view of prayer. We learn to pray appropriately by listening to the God who speaks, as babies learn to speak by being spoken to. What we often think as praying may be nothing but babbling if it is done without our listening first and learning from Him. God must shape our thinking, our values, and our relationships with his Word in order for us to have a meaningful interaction with Him. Peterson asserts that we do not pray appropriately because we are self-conscious rather than God-conscious.³³ There is a largeness in God's word. We must humbly enter into it, and respond humbly to His word when we pray.

Spiritual Care

Humble spirituality also shows us how we actually care for one another. At the

³² Peterson, *Working the Angle*, 47.

³³ Peterson, *Working the Angle*, 45ff.

heart of caring for one another is our paying attention to what God is doing in other persons' lives. The assumptions of a humble Christian in giving spiritual care are that God is already at work in the other's life, that each person is unique, and that he needs to respond to God's guidance appropriately.³⁴ In giving spiritual care, we will cultivate awe in response to each person, an attitude in which we do not reduce, marginalize, or categorize the other. As we come into such relationships humbly, we will also be aware of our ignorance and incompetence. There is so much that we do not know regarding another person, nor even about the extent of God's grace. Accordingly, we will learn to cultivate a predisposition to pray as we engage in relationships with one another. The call, ultimately, is not to solve another's problems or to impose our views on the other, but to enter together with that person into God's presence.

Sabbath Keeping

For Peterson, Sabbath keeping is a major aspect of spiritual formation. Keeping the Sabbath is more than just religious observance, it is an attitude of the heart that trusts and recognizes God. It is a confession of our trust in God. We can rest and trust that the world will not fall apart because we have ceased to work. It is also reflective of a humble spirituality where the emphasis of our soul is to pay attention to God and to His work. Sabbath is a time to rejoice and to exalt in God's grace so that we can "do what we see the father doing".³⁵

³⁴ Peterson, *Working the Angle*, 149ff.

³⁵ John 5:19.

Concluding Remarks

Peterson's humble approach to Christian life makes ordinary Christian practices such as Scripture reading, praying, spiritual direction, and Sabbath-keeping relevant and profound for those who are seeking to understand the process of spiritual formation. For many Christians, it may not be the case that they have been doing the wrong practices for their spiritual growth, but that they may have been doing the right practices wrongly. Peterson's insights direct us to the proper frame of mind with which we must approach spiritual formation.

Henri Nouwen

Introduction to Nouwen

Henri Nouwen echoes Peterson with the call to cultivate a life of attention to God. The emphasis of his books³⁶ *Reaching Out: The Spiritual Movements of the Spiritual Life* as well as *The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry* and *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership* is the cultivation of an honest inner life before God through spiritual practices that will become authentic and compassionate. His contributions to the nature and the process of spiritual formation are significant. His message can be summed up in one phrase, “the way of the heart.”

³⁶ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Spiritual Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1975).
Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry*. (New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 1981).
Henri J.M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*. (New York: Crossroad, 1989).

Whatever spiritual formation may involve, it must, above all, engage and transform the life of the heart. Nouwen unveils the problems of the heart that lie beneath all our problems, and directs our attention to the life of the heart that is possible only with God.

Problems of the Heart

Nouwen is especially insightful in exposing the desperate condition of the human heart. His descriptions of the human condition are realistic. Any discussion of spiritual formation that ignores or minimizes the sinful human condition will be, according to Nouwen, proven ineffective, irrelevant, and false. True spiritual formation must face and deal with the real malady of the heart.

Loneliness

One way that Nouwen describes the fallen human condition is that it is lonely.³⁷ Human beings want love and long for someone to take away their loneliness. As a result, we cling to others, suffocate others, demand much of them, and use them. Since no person can take away our deep loneliness, we find ourselves disappointed, hurt, and rejected. We are upset that others do not meet our needs, and we are then driven to find something that will fill the void and our pain. It is ironic that while we human beings desperately long to be close to one another, we constantly compete with or compare ourselves to, and are hostile to one another. We feel threatened; because we think of

³⁷ Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 23ff.

others as enemies who will steal from us and harm us.³⁸

Compulsiveness

Another way that Nouwen describes the heart condition of human beings is that it is compulsive.³⁹ As human beings, we are driven to own, to impress, to do, and to be whatever the surrounding milieu demands of us. The culture around us awakens our sense of fear, anger, and greed. Our existence then becomes so shallow that we are unable to think our own thoughts or to feel our own feelings.⁴⁰ This fraudulent existence is marked by shallowness, busyness, and the illusion of self-importance and immortality.

The Way of the Heart

Over and against such a desperate human condition, Nouwen exhorts humanity to follow the way of the heart. He urges readers to come to a quiet place to pray and to encounter God in silence and solitude. There our true selves are recovered and our senses restored. His remedy for the compulsive and lonely soul is spiritual discipline centered on solitude, silence, prayer, and contemplation. In this way the true identity, calling, and relationship with God can be recovered. “To live a life that is not dominated by desire to be relevant, but instead safely anchored in the knowledge of God’s first love, we have to be mystics. A mystic is a person whose identity is deeply rooted in God’s first love.”⁴¹

³⁸ Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 66.

³⁹ Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*, 21ff.

⁴⁰ Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*, 22.

⁴¹ Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*, 28.

Instead of being driven to grab power and control, God calls us to come to a place of humility, wonder, and gratitude that can be found in authentic communion with God in prayer.

According to Nouwen, it is in solitude, silence, and prayer, that we encounter not only our own false-self, compulsions and “demons” but also Christ and the grace to be transformed.⁴² In silence we learn to speak from a place of meaning, passion, and eternity.⁴³ Through the grace of God, the life of the heart gives us compassion to suffer with our neighbors and to be able to offer humble hospitality to others where they will be free to be themselves.⁴⁴

Clifford Williams

Introduction to Williams

Clifford Williams’ *Singleness of Heart: Restoring the Divided Soul*⁴⁵ explores problems that lie deep in human hearts. Such explorations are relevant to a better understanding of spiritual formation. Williams, like Nouwen, is helpful in his insights into the complexity of what divides our hearts.

⁴² Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*, 30.

⁴³ Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*, 50ff.

⁴⁴ Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*, 35-38.

⁴⁵ Clifford Williams, *Singleness of Heart: Restoring the Divided Soul*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1994).

Dividedness

Deep in the heart lies the problem of the human soul. Williams describes the problem as “dividedness” which has two aspects: “ambivalence” and “illusion.”⁴⁶

Ambivalence

By “ambivalence,” he means that our hearts are pulled in two opposite directions at the same time: we want God and we do not want God; we want to be holy and at the same time, we do not want to be holy. This inner struggle is at the root of our inability to love God consistently. Ambivalence is not the same as indifference; ambivalence is genuinely desiring two opposite things at the same time. This insight is helpful for Christians who struggle with their desire to love God and to live pure lives.

Illusion

By “illusion” Williams means that our real motives are different from the ones that we think we have.⁴⁷ This involves self-deception -- a place where we keep the truth of our motives even from ourselves. This is obvious when we realize that our reason for giving to the poor is not love, but a sense of superiority; when the true motive behind going into Christian ministry is not obedience to God’s call, but the need to earn God’s favor; and when the actual reason for the marriage was not covenantal love, but the fear

⁴⁶ Williams, *Singleness of Heart*, 6ff.

⁴⁷ Williams, *Singleness of Heart*, 9.

of loneliness. Christians' souls are actually divided. We live in ambivalence and illusion, and, unless that is recognized, we will not be free to live authentic lives before God.

The Motives Beneath the Divided Heart

Williams further explores in insightful, practical and disquieting ways, the motives created by our dividedness. Singleness of our heart is sabotaged from the beginning by our own motives. "These motives produce ambivalence and illusion with respect to Christian virtues such as compassion and also with respect to what many regard as the central Christian attitude -- that of being open to God's grace."⁴⁸ Different from what we claim, our true motivation for displaying compassion or being open to God's grace may actually be a desire for some other reward or fear of disapproval. Our motives are complex and murky. We are driven to justify our existence as we compare ourselves constantly with others and seek to congratulate ourselves secretly. It then becomes difficult for us to distinguish our own actions, desires and choices from those of our surroundings.⁴⁹

Barriers to Singleness of Heart

What we desire is a singleness of heart "[where] we are not pulled in opposite directions and when we act without wanting something further for ourselves."⁵⁰ True spiritual formation must identify and overcome the dividedness of our souls. What we

⁴⁸ Williams, *Singleness of Heart*, 21-22.

⁴⁹ Williams, *Singleness of Heart*, 21ff.

⁵⁰ Williams, *Singleness of Heart*, 10.

need is to be straight, clean, clear, and simple in our hearts before God. There are, however, barriers to singleness of heart. Williams presents four: imagination, busyness, indifference, and resistance.

Imagination

First, we have become addicted to *imagination*. Out of our many false motives,⁵¹ we imagine ourselves to be kind, holy, or loving. The problem is that we mistake what we imagine for the real thing. Williams explains, “The temptation to mistake image for reality is intense because we really want to be gentle and trusting. Moreover, the image is much safer than the reality.”⁵²

Busyness

The second barrier to becoming truly single in our hearts is *busyness*.⁵³ We become so caught up in, distracted by and occupied with so many demands that we do not have the time or the mind to attend to what is going on in our hearts. The motivation for busyness may be the many reasons described above. The truth is that being busy is an easy way out. It is an avoidance of the hard work of dealing with our own heart and being authentic before God.

⁵¹ Perhaps we desire to be admired or we fear being rejected by others. There are host of motives that undermine singleness of heart that feeds the barriers to the singleness of the heart.

⁵² Williams, *Singleness of Heart*, 56.

⁵³ Williams, *Singleness of Heart*, 59ff.

Indifference

The third barrier is *indifference*.⁵⁴ Perhaps this barrier is more prominent these post-modern days where questions related to God, meaning, and morality are dismissed as unimportant or irrelevant. Indifference is different from busyness. Unlike *resistance*,⁵⁵ which is “active opposition, indifference is having neither a special like nor a special dislike.”⁵⁶

Resistance

The last barrier that keeps us from the singleness of the heart is *resistance*. We are divided about the very thought of singleness of the heart. We want it, and we resist it. We resist it because singleness of heart is too wonderful, too big, and too radical. Besides, we have come to enjoy the false motives and inauthentic living. They are easier to work with and are gratifying. Singleness of heart demands painful changes and facing our true selves, and that we do not want to see.⁵⁷

The Way Out

Spiritual formation is an honest look at our own hearts and forces us to face, consciously, the barriers that keep us from loving God. In recognizing our dividedness,

⁵⁴ Williams, *Singleness of Heart*, 63ff.

⁵⁵ Williams, *Singleness of Heart*, 69ff.

⁵⁶ Williams, *Singleness of Heart*, 63-64.

⁵⁷ Williams, *Singleness of Heart*, 69-76.

we can approach God in heartfelt contrition and repentance. Only the grace of God, humbly received and genuinely experienced, can grant us the freedom of a singleness of heart.⁵⁸ Then, we will be free to love as God loves us.

Larry Crabb

Introduction to Crabb

In *Inside Out*, Larry Crabb identifies the true problems that lie beneath the surface.⁵⁹ Doing right and filling our lives with religious activities are insufficient motives for inner depth. “Surrendering” to God is not enough. We must face our misery, addictions, and relational problems and learn to recognize the deep *thirst* inside us that drives us to live with them.⁶⁰

Understanding Our Thirst

This “inside look” can help us to accept our longings, disappointments, pain and loneliness and lead to change. Crabb identifies three levels of thirst: the casual thirst, the critical thirst and the crucial thirst.⁶¹ Only God can meet the longings of the human heart, and this is where the change must begin: from the inside out.

Understanding our thirst, its motives, and the coping mechanisms we use in

⁵⁸ Williams, *Singleness of Heart*, 88ff.

⁵⁹ Larry Crabb, *Inside Out*. (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1988).

⁶⁰ Crabb, *Inside Out*, 58ff.

⁶¹ Crabb, *Inside Out*, 87ff.

response to it will make it possible for us to begin to change and to be healed. In taking an “inside look” we will come to accept and to admit our needs, longings, disappointments and limitations.⁶² By acknowledging our wrong approaches to satisfy our thirst, we can face God who alone can satisfy our true thirst and redirect our heart to His grace. The answers lie in encounters with God’s grace, a grace that goes deep enough to fill our thirst and to change us from the inside.

James Houston

Introduction to Houston

James Houston, in *The Mentored Life: From Individualism to Personhood* focuses on clarifying what it means to be human.⁶³ Clarity regarding the meaning of human existence is essential to a proper understanding of spiritual formation. Houston uses the word “individual” to describe a false human existence and “person” to describe the true existence. We will first explore what Houston meant by “individual” and then focus on the heart of what it means to be a “person.”

False Human Existence

Individuals are defined by what they do, believe, possess, or feel. Individuation is realized by competition, comparison, and achievements. Since concepts of uniqueness

⁶² Crabb, *Inside Out*, 224ff.

⁶³ James M. Houston, *The Mentored Life: From Individualism to Personhood*. (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 2002).

and superiority are the hallmarks of what it means to be an individual, dissimilarities between people are celebrated and emphasized. Such judgment is characteristic of the modern understanding of human significance.

Houston notes three individualistic modern approaches to humanity that shapes the mindset of many today: the “heroic” model, the “stoic” model, and the “psychotherapeutic” model. The goal of the “heroic” model is for the individual to be the center, to assert his/her self, to be celebrated, and to stand out. The goal of the “stoic” model, on the other hand, is for the individual to pursue autonomy, moral self-sufficiency, and excellence through his own efforts and will power. The goal of the “psychotherapeutic” model is for the individual to achieve psychological and emotional well-being through the uses of psychological techniques and therapies.⁶⁴

True Human Existence

Over and against these individualistic models of humanity, Houston offers a more realistic and Biblical vision. Rather than the word “individual,” Houston believes that the word “person” better describes the true vision and the nature of human beings. According to Houston, a person is defined by his relationships. Human beings are ultimately and fundamentally relational beings, created by God to have a relationship with Him and with the rest of creation. The self is not a thing, but a way of being with God and others. This idea is rooted in the Genesis 2 creation account and is reflected in the greatest commandment.⁶⁵ The essence of being a human being is to be in relationship

⁶⁴ Houston, *The Mentored Life*, 63ff.

⁶⁵ Matthew 22:37-40.

with God and with others. Indeed, “persons need persons to be persons.”⁶⁶

Freedom

This understanding of what it means to be human is common to those who described basic human misery as spiritual “thirsts,” loneliness, compulsiveness, or shallowness. These are fruits of the individualistic approach to human life that ignores the personal, relational aspect of human existence. True human freedom, therefore, is not being able to have or to do whatever we want, but to be what we were created to be. True freedom is found in being the kind of person who has a right relationship with God and with others. It is to be the kind of person who has a transparent, intimate, and dependent relationship with God. This freedom is possible for us sinners only through the gospel of Jesus.

Freedom is found in the “justified life” in which we are made righteous and beloved as the children of God through Christ’s atoning work. Indeed, we have peace with God through Jesus Christ.⁶⁷ In and through Christ, we are able to be mentored by God who takes the initiative for us to know Him and to live in His presence. We learn to cultivate the presence of God, mentored by His word, which is received personally and experientially. The goal for the person mentored by Christ is no longer to be different, but to be true, authentic, and to be alive to God at every moment.

⁶⁶ Houston, *The Mentored Life*, 111.

⁶⁷ Romans 5:1.

M. Robert Mulholland Jr.

Introduction to Mulholland

Mulholland is the first of the five authors whose work relates directly to the topic of spiritual formation. Mulholland's major contribution, in *Invitation to a Journey*, is his definition of spiritual formation. He not only defines what spiritual formation is, but also shows how it works. He defines it as "A process of being conformed to the image of Christ for the sake of others."⁶⁸ His definition has several components. Each of these components will be explored below.

"A Process"

First, spiritual formation is a process. It is not something to be achieved instantly or magically. One does not rush through it; it is not random or accidental. The process has four stages: awakening, purgation, illumination and union.⁶⁹ Awakening occurs when a person comes to see the points of unlikeness to Christ in his own life. Purgation is the process of dealing with the points of unlikeness to Christ, and illumination shows a new being who becomes like Christ in being consecrated to God. The last stage is union -- our experience of total absorption into God, marked by complete surrender to God.

⁶⁸ M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: a Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 15.

⁶⁹ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 81.

“Of Being Formed”

Second, the process of spiritual formation is also as “being formed” into the image of Christ. Grammatically, something is being done to us. We are not the main actor doing the formation. Whatever our roles may be, “being formed” involves us actively in what is being done to us.⁷⁰

Mulholland recommends classical spiritual disciplines such as prayer, spiritual reading and liturgy as the main means of spiritual formation.⁷¹ He understands that the disciplines are not ways “to win God’s favor or to get God to do what we think ought to be done in our lives.... But the classical disciplines serve to bring our lives into, and hold our lives in, God’s environment for wholeness in Christ...”⁷² It is God’s grace that is transforming us, but we are to engage in the classical spiritual disciplines to receive the grace.⁷³

“Into the Image of Christ”

Third, the aim of spiritual formation, according Mulholland’s definition, is to be formed into the “image of Christ” which is not something that is being added on to our personality; it means becoming the persons that we were originally meant to be.⁷⁴ The image of Christ is our true selves, the selves we have longed for all along. An important aspect of this spiritual formation, therefore, is to recognize the points of unlikeness to

⁷⁰ This concept has been also expounded by Eugene Peterson and Jerry Bridges.

⁷¹ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 104-117.

⁷² Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 104-105.

⁷³ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 136.

⁷⁴ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 34.

Christ and to confront them appropriately.

Mulholland focuses on diversity in the Body of Christ. While everyone is called to the image of Christ, this image of Christ is manifested uniquely in each individual Christian depending on his personality. Mulholland commends readers to be aware of their particular tendencies in order to mature in a holistic manner.⁷⁵

“For the Sake of Others”

Last, the focus of spiritual formation is “for the sake of others.” Mulholland’s insight shows us that our becoming more like Christ must result in our presence in community where we love one another. This last point is needed in our culture where spirituality is viewed in terms of personal fulfillment. However, true spiritual formation which reflects the likeness of Christ reveals itself in a way that makes us relate to our neighbors.⁷⁶

Jerry Bridges

Introduction to Bridges

In *The Practice of Godliness* and *The Disciplines of Grace: God’s Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness*, Jerry Bridges makes several contributions to the

⁷⁵ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 64ff.

⁷⁶ I would like offer, however, an addition to his definition with regards to this last point. I believe that the larger aim of spiritual formation should be better expressed as “for the sake of God and others.” The ultimate goal for spiritual formation must be for the sake of God, first and foremost. Our love for our neighbor is the second command that flows from the first command to love God with all our heart.

understanding of spiritual formation.⁷⁷ The first is his vision of spiritual formation. The second is his emphasis on our responsibility to train ourselves. The third is his clarification regarding the relationship between God's role and our role in the process of spiritual formation.

Vision for Spiritual Formation: Godliness

In *The Practice of Godliness*, Bridges offers a vision for spiritual formation that is both helpful and practical. It can be summed up in one word: Godliness. A typical understanding of "godliness" is as a lifestyle marked by the engagement in certain religious activities or by having certain God-like attributes. Bridges, however, focuses on Godliness, God-centered, and Godlikeness, which we typically equate with godliness, the result of a life centered on God. He explains,

Godliness consists of two distinct but complementary traits, and the person who wants to train himself to be godly must pursue both with equal vigor. The first trait is God-centeredness, which we call devotion to God; the second is Godlikeness, which we call Christian character. Godly character flows out of devotion to God and practically confirms the reality of that devotion.⁷⁸

Bridges' insight into godliness, as both the goal of spiritual formation and the means to that goal, means not just being like God, but being centered on God. Being like God is important, but what is more urgent is that we fear, love and desire God for Himself.⁷⁹ God is the very purpose for our existence. However, there is a tendency in us

⁷⁷ Jerry Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1983); Jerry Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace: God's Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1994).

⁷⁸ Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness*, 69.

⁷⁹ Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness*, 23-39. Bridges further defines God-centeredness as devotion to God which is expressed by fear of God, love of God and desire for God.

to make God into a means to an end in which our own character formation becomes the ultimate goal. Such an approach to spiritual formation is not only dishonoring to God, but it is also self-defeating. We need to desire to be like God because that is what our God desires for us. Furthermore, the very fountain of Godlikeness is God-centeredness. It is only when we center ourselves in God that we actually become like Him in our character.

Such a concept of godliness shapes the rhythm and the strategy for spiritual formation. If our understanding of godliness is primarily Godlikeness, then our strategy for spiritual formation will be to take on God's character directly by various means. The focus of our endeavor will be on our spiritual labor, ability and achievement. However, if our understanding of godliness is first God-centeredness, then we must draw closer to God, wait on God, and abide in God. Our focus then will be on God's beauty and grace. It is this latter approach that shapes Bridges' understanding of spiritual training.

Training

Bridges also contributes to our thesis by emphasizing training. Both of his works discussed in this paper emphasize the important place of training in spiritual formation. According to Bridges, we are responsible for training ourselves in godliness, that is, in our "own devotion to God and the conduct arising from that devotion."⁸⁰ On one hand, God provides what we need for godliness, and, on the other hand, we are responsible to train ourselves in the grace that God gives. He writes,

He gives us a new heart and moves us to obey him, he gives us a singleness of heart and inspires us to fear him, and he pours out his love into our hearts so that we begin to comprehend his love for us.... But though all of us as Christians

⁸⁰ Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness*, 43.

possess a basic God-centeredness as an integral part of our spiritual lives, we must grow in this devotion to God. We are to train ourselves to be godly; we are to make every effort to add godliness to our faith.⁸¹

Bridges stresses three minimum requirements for training in godliness: this training must involve a strong commitment to growth, as well as learning from a skilled teacher and lots of practice.⁸² Unfortunately, many Christians are not committed to growing spiritually, therefore the church is full of ungodly Christians. Even among those who desire to grow spiritually, many are being trained by people who are incapable of training them effectively. Only the Holy Spirit can train the people of God with the truth of God's Word.⁸³ There is also a great need for better practice in the grace of God. These requirements echo Willard's approach to spiritual discipline: we must possess a strong intention to learn and to practice spiritual disciplines in order to grow in the gracious work of God in our lives.

Bridges further clarifies the nature of spiritual training so that people can avoid the two approaches that are ineffective: the legalistic and self-righteous approach and the lazy and passive approach. The right motive for true spiritual training must be devotion to God and not some self-centered motives. It is our heart's devotion to God that will keep us from becoming lazy and unconcerned as well as from becoming self-righteous and proud. The focus should be on God. As Bridges says, "As the *source* of power for godliness is Christ, so the *means* of experiencing that power is through our relationship with him."⁸⁴ This understanding of the true source of power for godliness shapes the very content of spiritual training. Spiritual training, at the core, is about abiding in the

⁸¹ Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness*, 57-58.

⁸² Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness*, 43-47.

⁸³ Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness*, 44-45.

⁸⁴ Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness*, 74.

relationship with Christ. This presents us with a paradox: we are both totally dependent on God and totally responsible to grow in godliness.⁸⁵ This tension must be practiced if our spiritual training is to be fruitful.

God's Role and Our Role

Bridges explores and clarifies the tension between our role and God's role in spiritual formation in his book, *The Disciplines of Grace: God's Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness*. This is the third contribution that Bridges makes to our inquiry into the nature of spiritual formation. As the title of the book states, God's grace does not exclude our responsibility to train ourselves, but rather, there are disciplines that we must undergo precisely because we have been given His grace. These are the disciplines of grace.

God's Role

According to Bridges, God not only forgives us through the gospel of Jesus Christ, but the gospel changes our heart's motivation to pursue a life of discipleship. He writes, "If the love of Christ for us is to be the motivating force for a life of discipleship, how then can we come to the place where we are acutely conscious of His love? The answer is, through the gospel. It is, of course, the Holy Spirit who pours out his love into our hearts (Romans 5:5), but He does this through the message of the gospel."⁸⁶ God's

⁸⁵ Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness*, 75-77.

⁸⁶ Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace*, 25.

grace is transformational and effective. Christ's love compels us from the inside.⁸⁷

If it is God's role to pour His love into our hearts by His Spirit through the gospel of Jesus, then what is our role in this life-giving experience? Our role, Bridges says, is to "continually reflect on the gospel" and "recount the gospel" as it applies to us personally.⁸⁸ We need to present ourselves to the gracious work of the Holy Spirit and to the gracious word of the Holy Scriptures. On one hand, Bridges confesses, "...I have come to realize-both from personal study and observation of my life- that the deep work of spiritual transformation of my soul has been what the Holy Spirit has done, not what I have done. I can to some degree change my conduct, but only He can change my heart."⁸⁹ And at the same time, he asserts, "...perhaps it is more helpful to say, 'Our part is to work, but to do so in reliance upon God to enable us to work.' God's work does not make our effort unnecessary, but rather makes it effective."⁹⁰

Another way of saying "disciplines of grace" is "dependent disciplines."⁹¹ In this approach to spiritual disciplines, we are not passive nor are we in control. God does the transforming and calls us to respond and to actively depend on the enabling power of the Spirit. Such a disciplined lifestyle, depending on God, is deeply rooted in our sinful condition and in the nature of salvation itself.

Our Role

Bridges offers a keen insight into the true nature of sin by raising the familiar

⁸⁷ 2 Corinthians 5:14.

⁸⁸ Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace*, 25.

⁸⁹ Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace*, 104.

⁹⁰ Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace*, 133.

⁹¹ Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace*, 125ff.

question, “As Christians, should we view ourselves as sinners or saints?” The answer he offers is: both. “We should always view ourselves both in terms of what we are in Christ, that is, saints, and what we are in ourselves, namely, sinners.”⁹² What he is saying is that we are not saints when we are not in Christ. We are, in ourselves, sinners. It should not surprise us that we sin, when we know that we have not been abiding in Christ. Sin is natural and inevitable apart from remaining in Christ. In fact, not remaining in Christ, is itself greater sin beneath other sins. Remaining in Christ, living a lifestyle of depending on God’s grace, therefore, is absolute necessity if we are to live as saints.

Living a disciplined lifestyle of dependence on God’s grace becomes also necessary when we consider the meaning of salvation. We are saved by grace through faith, by depending on Christ alone for our righteousness. Now we are to live out the life of salvation by continuing to depend on Christ alone for our righteousness. Bridges explains:

But it is important to realize that we were not only saved by faith at a particular point in time, but we are to live by faith in Christ every day of our lives. This means... I must continue to renounce any confidence in my own goodness and place my confidence solely on Christ every day of my life, not only for my eternal salvation, but for my daily acceptance before a holy God.⁹³

Salvation is not a ticket to heaven, but a specific relationship with God through Jesus. It is a relationship of faith, hope and love with God through Christ. That is why Paul states, “the Righteous will live by faith,”⁹⁴ and that is also why salvation and disciplines are inseparable.⁹⁵ We have been saved to God who is the goal and the source of our existence. The righteousness that we have received is the right relationship with

⁹² Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace*, 40.

⁹³ Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace*, 51.

⁹⁴ Romans 1:17.

⁹⁵ Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace*, 80ff.

God, a relationship characterized by dependence, intimacy and obedience. In this ‘right’ relationship, God does not leave us as we are, but disciplines us as His children, and calls us to work out our salvation in fear and trembling before Him.⁹⁶ It is, therefore, grace that disciplines us, and the discipline itself is aimed at our receiving and remaining in God’s grace.

Dallas Willard

Introduction to Willard

In two studies, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*⁹⁷ and *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*,⁹⁸ Dallas Willard addresses questions related to the mechanics of spiritual formation. Particularly helpful is the precision with which he identifies the purpose and the process of spiritual formation. His aim is clear from the outset. Willard describes spiritual formation as, a “Spirit-driven process of forming the inner world of the human self in such a way that it becomes like the inner being of Christ himself.”⁹⁹ It is the “revolution of character, which proceeds by changing people from the inside through on-going personal relationship to God in Christ and to one another. It is one that changes their ideas, beliefs, feelings and habits of choice, as well as their bodily tendencies and social relations.”¹⁰⁰ The focus of change is the

⁹⁶ Hebrews 12:8; Philippians 2:12.

⁹⁷ Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishing, 1998).

⁹⁸ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. (Colorado Springs, CO : Navpress, 2002).

⁹⁹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 22.

¹⁰⁰ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 15.

inner life of a person. If the external manifestation of Christ-likeness becomes the focus of the process of transformation, then the process will become legalistic, shallow, and unsuccessful. The focus has to do with taking God's life into our own inner lives in such a way that our lives are connected, extended to, and assimilated into His.

Two major contributions of Willard's works are: 1) a detailed exploration of the human system in *The Renovation of the Heart* and 2) his teaching on spiritual disciplines in *The Spirit of Disciplines*. These are presented as the main means by which a person is truly spiritually formed.

Human System

First, the human system is explored in part and as a whole to give readers a clear understanding of what it really means to change. Change can reveal itself only in the human mind, emotions, will, body, and social relationships. Each component of the human system is surveyed with regards to its function, failure, and restoration through the gospel. This is both critical and practical, since, when we are talking of spiritual transformation, we are actually talking about changes in the way a person characteristically thinks, believes, feels, chooses, desires, behaves, and relates to others.

Mind

The human mind is defined as a person's ideas, images, and all the ways he connects and presents these ideas and images to himself. By "ideas" Willard means

beliefs, thoughts, and values that a person has. “Images” refer to visual mental pictures that a person has in his mind, usually laden with emotions and affections. The aim of spiritual formation is for us to identify the ideas and images that are false and unlike Christ and to replace them with ideas and images that are true and good. We are to train our minds to connect and present truth to ourselves. The mind affects how we feel and what we desire since our emotions and desires are inflamed by what is presented in the mind.¹⁰¹

Emotions

Human emotions, according Willard, involve not only what a person feels at a given moment as responses to various causes, but it also involves the overall mood and general emotional dispositions. Willard points out that no direct control over emotions is possible. Emotions and moods are results and responses to the underlying conditions in one’s life. There are reasons for our feelings, so they ought not be repressed nor obeyed, but listened to and understood. There are conditions that sustain emotions, and if we merely try to alter or respond to our emotions directly, this will lead to coping addictive behaviors that ignore the bases for those motions. We are to understand the underlying conditions behind our emotions and seek to change the causes that shape our emotions.¹⁰²

¹⁰¹ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 127.

¹⁰² Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 123.

Will

The human will is the CEO of the human system. It is in our power to originate, to consent, or not to consent. That is the core of who we are. The human will is designed to be connected to and to be under God's will so that it will direct the mind, emotions, and behaviors to be aligned to God's will. We are truly free when our will is enthroned by God's will.

The aim for the restored will is a clear, single, simple, and constant devotion to God. The problem of the fallen human will is that it is captured by false beliefs, feelings, and habits. Our will can be splintered, fragmented, and deceived. The way out, described by Willard, is for us to surrender our wills to God. This surrender will then lead us to deep contentment in God marked by peace, gratitude, and joy. Beyond contentment lies intelligent and energetic participation in God's work in our world. We are then no longer spectators, but are people caught up in a vivid and eternal drama in which we play a significant part.¹⁰³ The strongest human will is that which is surrendered to God's will, and the one that God will empower and direct to bring about His righteousness.

Body

The human body is not to be the master of human life, but its servant. It is not to be the goal for our existence, nor should it be worshipped. Rather, it should be recognized as the place of one's spiritual life, through which the whole of life is actually lived. It is the primary place of one's dominion, love, worship, and relationships. The body,

¹⁰³ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 150-152.

therefore, should be understood, cared for, trained, and led. It is true that attitudes, habits, and ideas can settle into our bodies in such a way that our bodies respond and act automatically. The aim of spiritual formation with regards to our bodies is to offer them to God, and to train them so that the wrong attitudes, habits, ideas that have settled in are replaced by those of Christ.¹⁰⁴

Social Dimension

According to Willard, spiritual formation is necessarily social.¹⁰⁵ Spiritual life must move from our relationship with God to our relationship to one another. Love of God and love of our neighbors are inseparable. The problem is that we experience rejection from others and, as a result, our relationships are marked by hostility and withdrawal. At the same time, we all long for safe relationships marked by unconditional commitment and love. What we desire is the sort of relationship that is seen in Trinity,¹⁰⁶ the place where we are invited to make our dwelling. We are, then, called to base all our relationships within our relationship to God. God's love will lead us to give and receive the love of others unconditionally.

Spiritual Disciplines

The second major contribution that Willard makes to our discussions regarding spiritual formation is his exposition of the spiritual disciplines in *The Spirit of Disciplines*.

¹⁰⁴ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 172ff.

¹⁰⁵ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 179ff.

¹⁰⁶ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 184.

For Willard, spiritual disciplines are the main means by which spiritual formation is realized. Without spiritual disciplines, one simply will not be changed. God has provided a process of the renovation of the heart, according to Willard, and the process of transformation is not mysterious, haphazard or arbitrary. Grace thrives in order. This God-given process is something that we can and must participate in through the spiritual disciplines.

Grace and Disciplines

In *The Spirit of Disciplines*, Willard catalogues the theological foundations and the workings of the spiritual disciplines, which rest, not in human effort and power, but in God's call and provision. Salvation must lead to change in one's life, not just forgiveness of sins. A new order of life has broken in, and the life of God's rule is to be lived out actually and increasingly within our bodies. Grace is the foundation and the engine from which we exercise the spiritual disciplines.

Characteristics of Disciplines

According to Willard, the key to practicing spiritual disciplines is following Christ's entire life, not just the highpoints.¹⁰⁷ We must imitate Christ in the daily life that he led in order to prepare us to follow Him in all areas of our lives, private and public. We need to follow him as He meditated upon the Scriptures, prayed, and spent time in solitude and in silence. We are to let the Holy Spirit lead us in a daily and consistent

¹⁰⁷ Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 5.

manner. The spiritual disciplines are in our efforts to follow Christ so that we can do later what we could not do in the present by our direct effort.¹⁰⁸ Willard explains, “Such an activity implants in us, the embodied personality that is the carrier of our abilities (and disabilities!) a readiness and an ability to interact with God and our surroundings in a way not directly under our control.”¹⁰⁹ These are not virtues in themselves, nor answers to all our problems, but they are effective ways for us to be trained in godliness. The effectiveness of spiritual disciplines is not rooted in the person practicing the disciplines, but rather, in the fact that he has placed himself in a sphere of God’s influence. Willard clarifies, “...to be spiritual disciplines, any such activities substituted would have to be activities of mind and body, done to bring our whole selves into cooperation with the divine order, so we can experience more and more a vision and power beyond ourselves.”¹¹⁰

A Survey of Disciplines

On one hand, Willard does not insist on identifying a complete list of spiritual disciplines, nor does he think one list might be right for everyone. On the other hand, he does recognize that there are some disciplines that have been used widely by the saints in the past that have been regarded as more effective than others. He, accordingly, recommends:

In shaping our own list of spiritual disciplines, we should keep in mind that very few disciplines can be regarded as absolutely indispensable for a healthy spiritual life and work, though some are obviously more important than others. Practicing a

¹⁰⁸ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 90ff.

¹⁰⁹ Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 151.

¹¹⁰ Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 153.

range of activities that have proven track records across the centuries will keep us from erring.... So, to help us make our all-important choices, let's list those activities that have had a wide and profitable use among disciples of Christ and approach them in a prayerful, experimental way.¹¹¹

There are other disciplines that can be added, depending on the person and specific needs that he has. There also can be many other kinds of activities that may not be recognized as a spiritual discipline that may, nonetheless, be "counted as disciplines."¹¹² In sifting through the many spiritual disciplines that Christians have used through the years, Willard makes a rough distinction between what he calls "the disciplines of abstinence" and "the disciplines of engagements."¹¹³

Disciplines of Abstinence

The disciplines of abstinence have to do with abstaining "to some degree and for some time from the satisfaction of what we generally regard as normal and legitimate desires."¹¹⁴ The need for such abstinence is because "in today's distorted condition of humanity, it is these basic desires that have been allowed to run a rebellious and harmful course, ultimately serving as the primary hosts of sin in our personalities."¹¹⁵ The disciplines of abstinence include solitude, silence, fasting, frugality and chastity.

¹¹¹ Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 59.

¹¹² Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 190.

¹¹³ Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 158ff.

¹¹⁴ Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 159.

¹¹⁵ Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 159.

Disciplines of Engagements

The disciplines of engagements follow and complement the disciplines of abstinence. Willard explains,

Roughly speaking, the disciplines of abstinence counteract tendencies to sins of commission, and the disciplines of engagement counteract tendencies to sins of omission. Life, as we have seen in an earlier chapter, does not derive its power of growth and development from withdrawal but from action—from engagement. Abstinence, then, makes way for engagement.¹¹⁶

It is not enough that we practice saying "no" to certain desires that may lead us to sin, we also need to practice saying "yes" to various activities that will help us to interact with the power and the grace of God in the world.

In sum, Willard is confident that the appropriate uses of these disciplines "will be more than adequate to help us receive the full Christ-life and become the kind of [people] that should emerge in the following of him."¹¹⁷

Neil T. Anderson and Robert L. Saucy

Introduction to Anderson and Saucy

Anderson and Saucy's *God's Power at Work In You*¹¹⁸ offers one of the most comprehensive accounts of spiritual formation among the works reviewed for the paper. While Anderson and Saucy cover a wide range of topics, only the main contribution to

¹¹⁶ Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 175-176.

¹¹⁷ Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines*, 191.

¹¹⁸ Neil T. Anderson and Robert L. Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 2001).

our inquiry will be highlighted here.

The key contribution of this book is the authors' emphasis on the finished work of Christ for the believers in the area of salvation and sanctification. This theological truth, they insist, must be whole-heartedly embraced and be experienced if a believer is to truly grow spiritually. The authors point out the basic problem is the ignorance or disbelief of this truth, and urge the reader to live out their new relationship with God.

Basic Problem

The problem, according Anderson and Saucy, is that many Christians do not know what God has already done for them and what is available for them. The issue is ignorance. Anderson and Saucy describe the spiritual condition of many Christians as that of slaves who have been legally liberated but yet still continue in the life of slavery unaware of the change in their status.¹¹⁹ Since many Christians do not know what God has already done for them, they live beneath what they have been given. Anderson and Saucy write, “[they] do not understand who they are in Christ. Therefore they fail to believe what has already happened at salvation, or don’t recognize past-tense sanctification. These people are trying on their own to become somebody they already are. But we cannot do for ourselves what Christ has already done for us.”¹²⁰

¹¹⁹ Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You*, 25ff.

¹²⁰ Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You*, 45.

Alive to God

Relationship to Sin

With an understanding of liberation comes a significant change in the believer's life with regards to sin. Anderson and Saucy argue that a Christian should primarily identify himself as a saint¹²¹ and realize that there has been a radical change with his relationship to sin. "We are to consider ourselves alive in Christ and dead to sin (Rom 6:11). Considering it doesn't make it so, we are to consider it so because it *is* so. Because we are alive in Christ, sin no longer has any rightful authority over us,"¹²² thus, we do not approach our relationship to God from a position of a condemned sinner groveling in the hand of God, but rather we approach our relationship to God from the gospel, where we come to God out of our love, confidence and righteousness.

The fundamental reality is that we are now in Christ, no longer in Sin. Anderson and Saucy make a distinction between Christians occasionally sinning and those still being under the dominion of sin.¹²³ At the heart of sin is a desire for independence and the rejection of God as God of our lives. It is a break of that promised relationship.¹²⁴ The evil of sin is that it has separated us from God, the very source of our goodness. Sin, thereby, brings about condemnation from God and moral pollution to our lives.¹²⁵ Indeed, "sin is a power that enslaves us"¹²⁶ which no human can overcome.

It is this power of sin that has been broken through the gospel of Jesus. In Christ,

¹²¹ Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You*, 35ff.

¹²² Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You*, 61.

¹²³ Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You*, 40.

¹²⁴ Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You*, 53.

¹²⁵ Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You*, 54-55.

¹²⁶ Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You*, 52.

sin no longer separates us from God. We are no longer fundamentally characterized by the desire for independence and rejection of God. We are now characterized by grace, by worship of Christ, dependence on Him, and intimacy and trust in Him. We are God's children. We are in Christ. It is in this sense that Anderson and Saucy claim that we are no longer in sin, but that we are in Christ. This does not mean that we will never sin, but it means that sin is no longer the dominant reality that defines us. Christ is!

Relationship to God

Our relationship to sin has fundamentally changed since our relationship to God has changed through the gospel of Jesus Christ. The whole of spiritual formation is rooted in the gospel. We must build our entire approach to Christian life around what God has already done for us in Christ. Anderson and Saucy insist that Christians must know the reality of salvation and sanctification that is already theirs through Christ if they are to mature spiritually. The reality of the past salvation and sanctification is that the believer is already justified, set apart, and regenerated.

The implications of this gospel are staggering. The fact that a believer is now actually righteous before God is unbelievable. The reality of a new heart that is alive to God opens up new possibilities of existence that were never there before. This is where Anderson and Saucy emphasize the role of believer in his own spiritual formation. The believer is not merely "to let go and let God," nor is it to try to attain what God has already given to him, but to know and realize what God has already given him, and to

make the new person real.¹²⁷

In a nut shell, what God has already given a believer, is a renewed, gracious relationship with God. It is this personal and intimate relationship to God that is the essence of eternal life and the source of our holiness. Anderson and Saucy state, “The change of legal relationship brought about by God’s gracious gift of justification provides results that are absolutely essential as a foundation for life with God, the only means of growth and sanctification.”¹²⁸ The believer’s role, then, is to know and to trust what God has provided, and to explore the new relationship with God with the new heart that He has given him.

Anderson and Saucy then outline various spiritual disciplines and other means of grace that are used to experience and to explore the restored relationship with God. They include discussions dealing with the Word of God, abiding in Christ, being filled with the Spirit, understanding the power of our actions and the law of God, as well as having fellowship with believers, and experiencing spiritual struggle and suffering.

Conclusion

The literature that is covered in this chapter is the foundation for this paper. While some works deal more directly and explicitly with the process of spiritual formation, others stress essential perspectives necessary for a proper understanding of the nature of spiritual formation.

Jonathan Edwards introduces a concept of “religious affections” which lies at the

¹²⁷ Anderson and Saucy, *God’s Power at Work In You*, 85ff.

¹²⁸ Anderson and Saucy, *God’s Power at Work In You*, 58.

core of what it means to be spiritually formed. Unless a person changes in his affections towards God and away from sin, there is no true spiritual formation. True affections, marked by love of God for God himself, bring about true freedom since a believer will love God out of his own desires that have been changed by the work of the Spirit. The source and the power of the new affections is the operation of the Holy Spirit through the gospel. Spiritual formation, which has to do with supernatural transformation of affections, therefore, is gracious. Affections are rooted in the gospel and sustained by the power of the indwelling Spirit.

John Piper further builds on the work of Edwards by reaffirming the unspeakable pleasure of knowing God. Desiring God, is not only the engine that drives the biblical spiritual formation, it is the very means for glorifying God. God is most glorified when his children are most satisfied in Him. Delighting in God is the way that we glorify God, and glorifying God (by delighting in Him), is the way that we are spiritually formed.

What we desperately need in order to fully appreciate the nature and the process of spiritual formation is not mere practice but a right attitude of the heart towards spirituality as a whole. Over against the “Promethean” mindset marked by techniques, programs, and formulas so prevalent in our culture, Eugene Peterson offers a much needed approach to spirituality. His “humble spirituality” emphasizes an orientation to God who is ever present, active and central. Our appropriate response to the reality of God is a humble cultivation of attentiveness, rest and waiting. Such spirituality impacts the way we read the Bible, pray and minister to others. This very attitude is formational and essential to our pursuit.

Henri Nouwen echoes the humble attitude of Peterson that calls for a spirit of

listening, honesty and vulnerability before God and others. Nouwen directs the readers towards an honest look at their inner lives. What is essential to spiritual formation is bringing our inner lives into the presence of God who alone can heal, restore and transform us. Clifford Williams and Larry Crabb also contribute greatly to an understanding of our inner lives. We approach God from the heart as people who are divided and thirsty. Not only must we come to know and face various diseases of the heart, we must also know and face the true calling of our inner selves. What does it mean to be human? According to James Houston, loving God and others is at the heart of what it means to be human. God's vision for us is the source of true freedom, which brings meaning and dignity into our lives. The reason why we are so miserable is because we have a flawed vision of what it means to be human.

The remaining authors, M. Robert Mulholland, Jerry Bridges, Dallas Willard, Neil Anderson and Robert Saucy, deal specifically with the process of spiritual formation. Willard's unique contribution to our discussion is his detailed exposition of the system of human life consisting of mind, emotion, will, body and social relationships. Understanding how each aspect of human life functions and changes, and seeing how they function together as a whole is helpful in understanding the process of spiritual formation concretely. Bridges expands this concept and focuses on how God's grace and human disciplines work together. His account of "Godliness" also helps shape the vision of spiritual formation as God-centeredness that leads to God-likeness. Mulholland's definition of spiritual formation focuses on its content, process, means and goal. Anderson and Saucy draw our attention to the all-important truth regarding the finished work of Christ.

Other authors have contributed to this paper but were not included in this chapter. I have sought to include here only those works that specifically shaped my approach to spiritual formation. I also wanted to highlight those who have contributed most directly to my thesis.

growing into the image of Christ through obedience to the Scriptures by the power of the Holy Spirit in our total personality,”³ and “a process that takes place within accountable relationships over a period of time for the purpose of bringing believers to spiritual maturity in Christ.”⁴

Recurring terms for the process of spiritual formation are: sanctification, spiritual transformation, character formation, spiritual growth, holiness, godliness, and discipleship. For example, the term “godliness” is used by Bridges to refer to both God-centeredness and God-likeness.⁵ Other writers use the term “holiness” not only to denote the concept of moral purity and Christ-likeness but also to denote being set apart by God as His unique people.⁶ Spiritual formation, whether referred to as sanctification, discipleship, spiritual growth, or by any other term, expresses the idea, explicitly or implicitly, of being devoted to God and being like God. In this paper, spiritual formation is considered from the perspective of godliness and holiness.

Being Alive to God

Spiritual formation means to be alive to God. This seems reasonable since we were created by Him and for Him. We exist for His pleasure and glory.⁷ The focus of spiritual formation, therefore, must be God and not ourselves. To know Him, to desire

InterVarsity. 1993), 12.

³ Frank Bateman Stanger, *Spiritual Formation in the Local Church*, (Grand Rapids, MI : Zondervan, 1989), 17.

⁴ Ron Bennett, *Intentional Discipleship Making: Cultivating Spiritual Maturity in the Local Church*. (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 2001), 12.

⁵ Jerry Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1983), 20.

⁶ Neil T. Anderson and Robert L. Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You* (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 2001), 19.

⁷ John Piper, *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*, (Sisters, Oregon., Multnomah Books 1986), 42-43; Jonathan Edwards, *Treatise Concerning the Religious Affections* (1808; Abridged edition, *Religious Affections: How Man's Will Affects His Character Before God*, Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1984), 91.

Him, to look to Him, to obey Him, to follow Him, to wait for Him, to be captured by His beauty, to bring Him pleasure, to be utterly happy and satisfied in His presence --that is life! Our desire is to live in a humble, honest, and transparent relationship with God, a relationship that transforms from our innermost hearts to every aspect of our daily lives. Being alive to God means being in the presence of God, delighting in God, worshipping God, surrendering to God and depending on God.

Life in the Presence of God

A spiritually formed life is a *life in the presence of God*. Having relationships is the essence of what it means to be human; therefore, the central relationship that defines us is our relationship with God. We were made in His likeness for Him.⁸ God commands us to love Him with all our heart, mind and strength, and to love our neighbors as we love ourselves.⁹ This commandment reveals not only what God desires and delights in (our love), but it also reveals something of ourselves in terms of our design, dignity and calling.

We were created for God. In fact, we need Him more than we need air, and knowing Him is life.¹⁰ Jesus Christ came to us in the flesh so that we, through Him, can have a living fellowship with God the Father.¹¹ No one and nothing can satisfy our longing for God but God Himself. The longing for God, directly or indirectly, is at the root of all human desire. Consequently, the root of all human misery -- in its addictions,

⁸ Gordon D Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*. (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996), 9; James M. Houston, *The Mentored Life: From Individualism to Personhood*. (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 2002), 90.

⁹ Matthew 22:36-38; Mark 12:29-31.

¹⁰ John 17:3.

¹¹ John 1:1-2.

idolatry and brokenness -- lies in humanity's desperate attempt to satisfy this thirst anywhere but in God.¹² The best gift of all is the presence of God in our lives.¹³

The goal of spiritual formation is to be at home with God in our hearts and to live every moment in His presence.¹⁴ We cling to, abuse, manipulate, and compete with others because we are not at home with God. We run desperately from one object to another, driven by our own loneliness, vanity and insignificance because we need to know that we can do nothing apart from abiding in Jesus.¹⁵ We can live meaningful lives only when we live in God.¹⁶ This is the aim of spiritual formation: intimacy, love, and union with God.¹⁷

Similarly, Nouwen offers us a new way of approaching the question of meaning in our lives. We should not ask, "How successful or competent are we?" but "Do we love Jesus?" "Do we place God first?" Do we live from the heart?" "Are we truly living?"¹⁸ Our task remains to be "always with the Lord." As Nouwen says, "Keep your mind in your heart and do not let your thoughts wander; as often as they stray, turn them back again and keep them at home in the closet of your heart and delight in conversation with the Lord."¹⁹

¹² Larry Crabb, *Inside Out*. (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1988), 58.

¹³ Psalm 42:1, Psalm 73:26, Luke 11:13, John 14:18.

¹⁴ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *Reaching Out: The Spiritual Movements of the Spiritual Life* (New York: Doubleday, 1975), 145.

¹⁵ John 15:5; Philippians 4:13.

¹⁶ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry*. (New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 1981), 27; Houston, *The Mentored Life*, 113-114.

¹⁷ M. Robert Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey: a Road Map for Spiritual Formation* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1993), 97.

¹⁸ Henri J.M. Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*. (New York: Crossroad, 1989), 24.

¹⁹ Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 124.

Life of Delighting in God

A spiritually formed life, therefore, is a *life of delighting in God*. What we delight in, what we truly love, shapes the contour of our lives. True Christians love God for God Himself. God is never to be a means to an end. He is the end. All things exist for Him. God is the treasure for which we would gladly exchange all that we possess.²⁰ True Christians love God for the beauty of His holiness.²¹ Many religious people find God useful or even fearful, but only Christians find Him beautiful. The vision of God's beauty has captured the love of the saints and drives them to uttermost devotion and joyful sacrifice.²² Delighting in God is the means by which our sovereign God brings glory to Himself.²³ In the most profound way, true Christians are to live as "amateurs," as "people who are engaged in something for the sake of love with no greater ulterior motives."²⁴

The way to Him is affection, the mainspring of human actions, feelings, behaviors, and choices. As Edwards says, "No change of religious nature will ever take place unless the affections are moved."²⁵ At the heart of spiritual formation is love, a heart change that turns our affections toward God. There can be no real deep change without love.

The Bible is filled with expressions of love in describing our relationship with God: love, gratitude, joy, satisfaction, and happiness. Happiness in holiness is something

²⁰ Matthew 13:44-46.

²¹ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 99.

²² Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 170.

²³ Piper, *Desiring God*, 23.

²⁴ Houston, *The Mentored Life*, 21.

²⁵ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 10.

that the world knows nothing about. In fact, it dwarfs all other delights in the world.²⁶ Delighting in God is so fundamental to our relationship with God that Piper identifies himself as a “Christian Hedonist” whose purpose is to glorify God by enjoying Him forever.²⁷ Spiritual enjoyments are such that the more we have of them, the more we desire them. The more we desire, the more we are capable of loving. Spiritual enjoyment satisfies the human soul like nothing else and will never end.²⁸ “You have made known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.”²⁹

Life of the Worship of God

A spiritually formed life, therefore, is a *life of the worship of God*. It is a life centered on God in which the Christian finds God glorious -- worthy of his trust, devotion, surrender, and obedience. Christian worship flows naturally from the presence of God. God has become man’s home, the dwelling place where he can be authentic, fulfilled and secure. God is the greatest good for which he will exchange everything. God receives the greatest “worth-ship” through Christian life and is most glorified when His children are most satisfied in Him.³⁰

True worship is rooted in who God is and what He has done for us. Worship is our humble and wholehearted response to God’s glory and grace. When we consider WHO God is, how can we not worship Him? When we consider WHAT God has done for

²⁶ J.C. Ryle, *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots*. (Durham, England: Evangelical Press, 1979), 74-75.

²⁷ Piper, *Desiring God*, 15-23.

²⁸ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 163-164.

²⁹ Psalm 16:11.

³⁰ Piper, *Desiring God*, 23.

us, how dare we not follow Him? Our worship, therefore, is simply our total response to who God is and to what he has done for us. Obedience, devotion, joy, surrender, awe and love are the true factors in of our worship of God.

Life of Surrender to God

A spiritually formed life, therefore, is a *life of surrender to God*. A life of surrender follows naturally from a life in the presence of God. The Christian realizes the greatness of God and rejoices, resting in the knowledge that only God is God. Knowing that God alone is God means that the Christian is not in control of his life. Only God is. This, I believe, is the strength that sustained Paul throughout his ministry.³¹ What Paul did was to surrender his life to God.

Surrender does not mean that we become “will-less,” devoid of will or passion. What this does mean is that our will is to be enthroned and inflamed by God’s will. We are to be neither “will-less” nor willful, but willing.³² God has given us free will to come to Him and to depend on Him; it is designed to help us live in the context of God’s rule over us. As Willard says, when we abandon our willfulness and surrender, as long as we have God, we are content. This deep contentment makes it possible for us to participate in God’s work because God is the One who inflames us for His work.³³

Since God is, in fact, God, it is reasonable for us to surrender our lives to Him. Not giving our lives to God -- who alone is all-powerful, all-knowing and loving -- is

³¹ Philippians 1:20-24.

³² Houston, *The Mentored Life*, 104.

³³ Dallas Willard, *Renovation of the Heart: Putting on the Character of Christ*. (Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress, 2002), 150-152.

absurd. He is the Lord of all. The radical call of Jesus to take up the cross and follow Him turns out to be the most reasonable and loving of all invitations. A true Christian life is a life of total surrender, abandonment, and radical commitment. We are to follow Jesus -- our home, our delight, our treasure and our God.

Life of Dependence on God

A spiritually formed life , therefore, is a *life of dependence on God*. God is not only the goal and the delight of our existence, He is the very source of our existence. He made us; He is the one who redeemed us and is the one who sustains us. To Him be all glory! Paul speaks of this great truth when he declares that the “righteous will live by faith.”³⁴ Paul did not say that the righteous are merely made righteous by faith, but that they are to LIVE by faith. Our righteousness denotes a right relationship with God, and a right relationship with God is, essentially, a relationship of dependence (trust, hope and love). We love God because He first loved us. We trust Him because He has given us the grace to trust Him.³⁵

At the heart of the spiritually formed life is a focusing not on our own performance but on our Savior. The aim of such a life is an ongoing relationship of faith, hope and love with God who is its source.³⁶ This, I believe, is the reason why we can do nothing apart from Jesus.³⁷ The heart of a true spiritual life is to live in complete dependence on God. On the other hand, the heart of a sinful life is the desire to live

³⁴ Rom 1:17.

³⁵ John White, *The Pathway of Holiness: A Guide for Sinners*. (Downers Grove, IL : Intervarsity, 1996), 134.

³⁶ White, *The Pathway of Holiness*,143-144.

³⁷ John 15:25.

independently of God.

Becoming Like God

Like the first aspect of spiritual formation, being alive to God, the second aspect is to be like God in our character. This means being alive to God leads us to our becoming like God.³⁸ It is God's presence and our delight in and worship of Him that bring about change in our character.

The vision of a spiritually formed life is *to become conformed to the image of Christ*.³⁹ How can a person who lives in the presence of God remain unaffected by His beauty? A person who lives in fellowship with God will not only learn to appreciate God's moral goodness but will faint with longing to be part of that beauty. God, Himself, longs for this and has called us to be holy as He is holy.⁴⁰ We have been predestined to conform to the likeness of Christ.⁴¹ Christ laid down His life, so that we can come, holy and blameless, before the Father.⁴² Our deep passion to be like Christ is, thus, God's own passion to make us like Himself.

“Becoming like Christ” means that our inner character (thoughts, emotions, volitions, desires, affections and habits) are shaped and replaced by those of Christ.⁴³ Without such transformation, there will be no real change in our character.⁴⁴ What we

³⁸ It is true that being like God will also influence our relationship with God. There is a mutual feedback. However, the overall pattern remains to be: being alive to God → becoming like God. Becoming like God is a result of being with God in His grace.

³⁹ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 12.

⁴⁰ 1 Peter 1:15-16.

⁴¹ Ephesians 1:15.

⁴² Ephesians 5:25-27.

⁴³ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 89.

⁴⁴ Romans 12:2.

long to be are people who respond to God and to our circumstances with appropriate emotions rooted in faith, hope and love. We desire life wherein we offer our bodies to be trained for that life.

To be like God in our inner character is a recurring theme in the literature. We are to be conformed to the image of Jesus.⁴⁵ We are to be changed from the inside out⁴⁶ and take on a character strong in holiness.⁴⁷ This is spiritual growth and maturity.⁴⁸ It is walking in the Spirit⁴⁹ and bearing the fruit of the Spirit.⁵⁰ We desire not only to be forgiven of our sins we need to be raised up with Christ so that we can live a new life in Him.⁵¹

The call, therefore, is to be *free from the dominion of sin* in our lives. We need to come to an honest realization of the sin in our lives, to uproot it and to put away our idols.⁵² We long to be free from the fear of others and to “die to our neighbors” so that we can truly love them.⁵³ We want to come to a glad place, to be dead “to the glory of

⁴⁵ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 33-39; Stanger, *Spiritual Formation in the Local Church*, 17; Lawrenz, *The dynamics of spiritual formation*, 15; Jerry Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace: God's Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1994), 98; Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 144.

⁴⁶ Timothy S. Lane and Paul David Tripp, *How People Change*. (Greensboro: New Growth Press, 2006), 173; Jim Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship: The Challenge of Following Jesus in Today's World*. (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1993), 83; Crabb, *Inside Out*, 61.

⁴⁷ J.S. Baxter, *A New Call to Holiness; A Restudy and Restatement of New Testament Teaching Concerning Christian Sanctification*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1967), 107; Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You*, 21; Ryle, *Holiness*, 39-42; White, *The Pathway of Holiness*, 12; Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 22.

⁴⁸ Bennett, *Intentional Discipleship Making*, 11- 12; Lawrenz, *The dynamics of spiritual formation*, 30-33; Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You*, 33.

⁴⁹ Siang-Yang Tan and Douglas H. Gregg, *Disciplines of the Spirit: How to Connect to the Spirit's Power and Presence*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1997), 19-20; Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, 106-108.

⁵⁰ Jerry Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness* (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1983), 70.

⁵¹ Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You*, 30; Dallas Willard, *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives* (New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishing, 1998), 32-34.

⁵² White, *The Pathway of Holiness*, 139; Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 82-86; Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship*, 98-99; Clifford Williams, *Singleness of Heart: Restoring the Divided Soul*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans Publishing Co, 1994), 133-135.

⁵³ Nouwen, *The Way of the Heart*, 35.

the world and the applause of men.”⁵⁴ We cry out to be free from the dividedness of our souls and to love God and our neighbors singleheartedly.⁵⁵

The spiritually formed person, whose life is rooted in the presence of God, will be able to live an authentic life in which he will no longer be compulsive, driven, busy, vain or manipulative. He will be able “to ask his own questions, say his own prayers, and feel his own pain.”⁵⁶ He will no longer be driven by his thirst, but will be marked by satisfaction, significance and security.⁵⁷ He will have nothing to prove, no one to impress, no need to justify his existence. He will be able to mourn authentically for the pains of the world and be able to invite others into a large place of compassion, humility and friendship.⁵⁸

The spiritually formed person, who reflects the image of Christ, will be alive to others. God’s love and presence in Christ will free him to be able to see others as Christ sees them. His own relationship with God will make space in his heart for hospitality, humility, and freedom with others.⁵⁹ Since love of others comes from God Himself, the spiritually formed person will feel “as if what is happening to others is happening to [him]”⁶⁰ because the aim of spiritual formation is for the “sake of others.”⁶¹ In fact that is essential.

Being alive to others also means that the spiritually formed person is zealous for the salvation of others.⁶² He is obedient to the work of the Holy Spirit who reveals and

⁵⁴ White, *The Pathway of Holiness*, 142.

⁵⁵ Williams, *Singleness of Heart*, 10-14.

⁵⁶ Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 40.

⁵⁷ Crabb, *Inside Out*, 58.

⁵⁸ Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 54-55.

⁵⁹ Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 65.

⁶⁰ White, *The Pathway of Holiness*, 129.

⁶¹ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 12.

⁶² J.C. Ryle, *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots*. (Durham, England: Evangelical

convicts” the hearts of people with the truth of the gospel.⁶³

In sum, becoming like God is *to be everything that God has enabled us to be*. To be like Christ is not a pipe-dream but a calling from God rooted in the gospel. Spiritual formation is sustained and empowered by what God has done for us and is doing in us. God has given us His son. Because we have the Spirit of Jesus, we have access to the Father; we are given God’s own righteousness; we are clothed in Christ; we are forgiven and loved, and our old relationship with sin has been broken. We have been born again in the Spirit, baptized with Christ and raised as new people with a new identity. We are the holy people of God. Our hearts of stone have been replaced with hearts of flesh on which God has written His Law; our minds have been made alive so that we can have the mind of Christ. He has given us the living word to illuminate our hearts and transform us. He has given us all that we need.

The Nature and the Process of Spiritual Formation

Spiritual Formation is Necessary

Spiritual Formation is necessary. It is not an elective course reserved for a few “elite” Christians; it is not an “extracurricular” activity. Spiritual formation is what prepares us to glorify God. God commands this, delights in it, and died for it. In view of the wretched condition of our former lives, and in view of the immeasurable price that Christ paid for it with His own blood, how can spiritual formation NOT be the central

Press, 1979), 87.

⁶³ Bennett, *Intentional Discipleship Making*, 45-50; Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, 86.

agenda of God's people?⁶⁴ Jesus did not die merely to forgive our sins; He died so that we can live a new life through Him right now. Salvation is the new order of life,⁶⁵ and growth in that life is necessary.⁶⁶

Spiritual formation is necessary for our happiness.⁶⁷ We are most happy when we are in an intimate relationship with God. We are most free when we live in God and are like God in our character. When we are happy we behold the beauty of God and are deeply affected by the sight. Our true and permanent selves are what we are when we live in God.⁶⁸

Spiritual formation is what we need in order to realize that we are Christians. A tree is recognized by its fruit.⁶⁹ Being spiritually formed is the evidence that proves we are saved, that the Holy Spirit dwells in us, and that we are being renewed.⁷⁰

Spiritual formation is, therefore, necessary for us to be used by God for His purpose. The fruitfulness of our lives depends on it. Our spiritual formation makes us long to be people whom God can use. It is the key to our witnessing to the world who God is,⁷¹ and is necessary for us to have the power, character, and wisdom to serve and benefit others.⁷²

⁶⁴ Ryle, *Holiness*, 39-42; Bridges, *Practice of Godliness*, 16.

⁶⁵ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 32-34.

⁶⁶ Stanger, *Spiritual Formation in the Local Church*, 37-38.

⁶⁷ Ryle, *Holiness*, 42.

⁶⁸ White, *The Pathway of Holiness*, 154; Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 34; Stanger, *Spiritual Formation in the Local Church*, 39.

⁶⁹ Matthew 7:17-20; Luke 6:43-44.

⁷⁰ Ryle, *Holiness*, 40.

⁷¹ White, *The Pathway of Holiness*, 12.

⁷² Ryle, *Holiness*, 41; Stanger, *Spiritual Formation in the Local Church*, 48-49.

Spiritual Formation Takes Place in the Context of Sin

Sin is an issue. We cannot consider spiritual formation without dealing with sin. If spiritual formation is about being formed into the image of Christ, we need to recognize our current sinful condition. If spiritual formation is about intimacy with God, we need to understand that sin is to hide from God, to deny God, and to push God from our hearts and daily lives. Sin is such an issue because it is what condemns us and separates us from God. It caused the suffering and death of Christ Himself, and it continues to cause immeasurable pain not only in the hearts of humanity but in the heart of God. Sin is an issue. The reason why Jesus came to earth was to destroy the work of the devil.⁷³

Sin is still an issue. Ever since the resurrection of Christ, after giving us a new heart, a new identity and a new destiny, filling us with His Spirit and clothing us with Christ, sin is still an issue. Even after experiencing salvation and tasting a life of holiness, the sins that we thought were dead are very much alive in us.⁷⁴ Its tendencies and deception still influence us.⁷⁵

The heart of sin is much more than just desiring “wrong things” or doing things that are contrary to God’s law. The heart of sin touches the very character of our relationship with God. Sin’s true nature, as seen in Genesis 3, is our rejection of God as

⁷³ 1 John 3:18.

⁷⁴ White, *The Pathway of Holiness*, 13.

⁷⁵ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 127; Anderson and Saucy, *God’s Power at Work In You*, 87; Ryle, *Holiness*, 3–4.

There may be some disagreements as to what to call the sinfulness that remains in Christians. The terminology may include: sinful nature, flesh, old self, old man, old nature, dead body, sinfulness, or simply sin. There are also some discussions as to how effectively or permanently a Christian can overcome sin, or whether we should describe our current situation as having ‘dual natures’ or having a single nature that is being restored. See Baxter or Baker for more discussions. But the agreement in all of the works reviewed is that, however we term it or think it, sin is still a present reality that all Christians must fight vigorously against.

God.⁷⁶ It is the dethroning of God as king in our lives and deciding for ourselves what is good and what is evil. It is being so deceived that we do not believe that we are accountable to God and that we did not need Him. We suppress the truth of our sinfulness⁷⁷ and are blind.⁷⁸ At root, it is our pride that “keeps us deceived.”⁷⁹ We are not merely the victims of lies of the “World” and the devil, but we ourselves are their perpetrators.

The heart of sin is *the sin of idolatry*. Rejection of God as God leaves a gaping hole in our lives that we fill with idol worship. We have left the source of life and have dug for ourselves a man-made cistern to meet our needs.⁸⁰ This is sin, the reversal of God’s plan for us. Instead of ruling over creation as God intended, we make ourselves gods, and worship them.

The consequence of spiritual idolatry for the human soul is devastating. Humanity is marked with a deep emptiness, and a thirst to fill it is at the root of all human addiction and misery.⁸¹ We cling to one another, to money, to prestige, and to success because we are lonely, empty, insecure, and vain.⁸² Once we get rid of God as God, degeneration sets in.⁸³ We lie, cheat, deny God and make excuses for ourselves. We are vengeful, defensive and judgmental.⁸⁴ Our souls are divided because we live in a state of perpetual illusion and ambivalence.⁸⁵ Romans 1-4 describes the fall that begins as soon as we suppress truth and rebel against God; we become degenerate in all our relationships.

⁷⁶ William Baker, *Sanctification: Why We Resist God, How to Overcome It*. (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 1986), 15-20; Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You*, 53-54.

⁷⁷ Romans 1:18.

⁷⁸ Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship*, 94-96; Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*, 4-6.

⁷⁹ White, *The Pathway of Holiness*, 36.

⁸⁰ Jeremiah 2:13.

⁸¹ Crabb, *Inside Out*, 58.

⁸² Nouwen, *In the Name of Jesus*, 21; Peterson, *Contemplative Pastor*, 18.

⁸³ Rom. 1:21-32; Baker, *Sanctification*, 23-24.

⁸⁴ Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*, 124-125.

⁸⁵ Williams, *Singleness of Heart*, 7-11.

We suffer anguish and feel the depth of our brokenness as image-bearers of God. The result is guilt, condemnation, and death. The image of God-likeness is still there, but it is now shattered.

The source of sin is within us. As Pogo once quipped, “We have met the enemy, and he is us,” and as Lawrenz said, “We are not just ink-stained paper; we are thoroughly crumpled.”⁸⁶ Our problem is not “out there somewhere”; the problem is within us. WE are sinful. We suppress the truth; we rebel against God’s rule. We live in idolatry; we blame others and shift responsibilities. We are “crinkled.” There are many circumstances in our lives that lead to occasions to sin, but there is only one consistent cause for our sinning. It is our own hearts.⁸⁷

The dilemma of sin is that it separates us from God, the source of life, who alone can give us righteousness, goodness, dignity, wisdom and joy -- the elements of authentic existence. However, sin has separated us from God.⁸⁸ The absence of God, the separation from God, is the most devastating and debilitating part of human life. God is both the source and the goal of our lives. His law is designed to bring freedom and joy to those who follow it for God is life itself,⁸⁹ and being separated from Him is the worst scenario of all. Without God there is no hope.

Spiritual Formation is a War

Spiritual formation exists to eradicate sin, and *the grace is the main context* in

⁸⁶ Lawrenz, *The dynamics of spiritual formation*, 52.

⁸⁷ James 1:13-15; Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*, 133.

⁸⁸ Isaiah 59:22.

⁸⁹ John 17:3; Acts 17:28.

which that formation takes place. “Where sin increases, grace increases all the more.”⁹⁰ Spiritual formation is necessary because sin exists, and it is only possible in the context of the gospel of Jesus. The challenge posed by sin is the fact that it has separated us from God, the source of our righteousness. The gospel response is “God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”⁹¹ The greatest power of sin lies in its ability to keep us from God; however, that power has been broken by the gospel.⁹²

*It is the presence of God that makes Christian life possible. Since God is the source of all righteousness, our only hope is to remain in Christ.*⁹³ The focus of our struggle should not be our sins or ourselves but God who dwells in us.⁹⁴ We are not left alone to fight against our sinful tendencies because we have been given the Holy Spirit, God’s empowering presence in us.⁹⁵ God has promised us that “sin shall not be [our] master because [we] are not under the law, but under grace.”⁹⁶ Our task is not to struggle on our own but to stand in Christ, for Christ is with us.⁹⁷ Therefore, although the life of spiritual formation is a battle, it is carried on in the context of God’s grace.

Spiritual formation is not *a struggle for God’s grace but a struggle within the context of God’s grace*. The fight to make us right with God is over. Jesus won. “There is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ.”⁹⁸ Spiritual formation is not about winning God’s grace but about living out God’s grace. It is not about getting God to

⁹⁰ Romans 5:20.

⁹¹ 2 Corinthians 5: 21.

⁹² Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work In You*, 53.

⁹³ Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*, 28-29.

⁹⁴ White, *The Pathway of Holiness*, 70.

⁹⁵ Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, 15-16; Ryle, *Holiness*, 60.

⁹⁶ Romans 6:14.

⁹⁷ Baker, *Sanctification*, 146.

⁹⁸ Romans 8: 1.

accept us, to love us, or to be with us; it is about enjoying God's love, acceptance and presence to the fullest.⁹⁹ This is a joyous ongoing battle. It is only God's grace that keeps our sinful natures from having dominion over us. Indeed, our sinful nature is "checked, controlled, mortified by the expulsive power of the new principle of grace."¹⁰⁰

Spiritual formation is *the fight for the heart*. We sin because we want to; therefore, God's grace operates at the root of sin, the human heart. God wants us to want to love Him. The battle against evil is a battle for our affection, love, desire and joy; that is, for dominion of the heart.¹⁰¹ The believer's struggle is efficacious because it reveals that another principle, other than sin, is at work in our hearts. Every temptation is a trial that can be used by God to make us humble and dependent on Him.¹⁰² Spiritual formation is the process through which God changes us from the heart.

Spiritual Formation is a Process

It is important to realize that *spiritual formation is a process*. There is no instant spiritual or character formation; there is no magical spiritual growth. Some may wish for a charismatic/spiritual experience or activity that will transform them instantly, but there is no such thing.¹⁰³ What we have been given is a God-ordained process in which God's grace is active. Our call is to learn and to understand the process and to humbly and

⁹⁹ Bridges, *Disciplines of Grace*, 21.

¹⁰⁰ Ryle, *Holiness*, 5.

¹⁰¹ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 10; Willard, *Renovations of the Heart*, 150-151.

¹⁰² James 1:2-4.

¹⁰³ We all have significant events, critical experiences that may have considerably contributed to our spiritual formation. But these events or experiences were not magical short-cuts that led to instant maturity. They were a significant part of the whole process of growth, not a bypass.

diligently follow the way in which God directs us.¹⁰⁴

The process of spiritual formation is, thus, *an interpersonal process of knowing God and being known to God*. It is a process of devotion to God in which trusting, doubting, laughing, crying, dying, and becoming are all part. It cannot be rushed, coerced or reduced. In fact, this process is so comprehensive that it is impossible to figure it all out. Instead, we are called to immerse ourselves in the process by being attentive, open, obedient and joyful.

Spiritual formation is *a process of grace*. It is rooted in what God has done, and has made possible, for us. God initiates it, provides for it, and enables us to participate in it. It is His gift. This means that we need not fret, rush, worry or give up. God has begun the good work in us and will bring it to completion.¹⁰⁵ What we need to do is to trust in God's grace alone.

Spiritual formation is *a process for the humble*. We are not in charge. We need not bulldoze our way through the process, managing, demanding, and controlling. Rather, we are being formed by God by His presence and His truth. God is in charge. We need to pay attention to God's way, God's timing, God's priorities, and God's order. God nurtures what He creates; only God can produce a spiritual life in us.¹⁰⁶ It is not in us to change the realities around us. God will bring us safely through them.

Spiritual formation is *a process that begins from the inside*. Any change in us must be deeper than a mere exterior alteration of behavior or religious activity. Change must be from within. We need a gentle yet rigorous process of inner transformation at the level of our affections, motives, worldview, values and identity. If we seek the

¹⁰⁴ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 21-23.

¹⁰⁵ Philippians 1:16.

¹⁰⁶ Lawrenz, *The dynamics of spiritual formation*, 29-32.

transformation without such inner transformation, we will never be transformed spiritually.

Because it is an interpersonal process of grace that begins from the heart, spiritual formation is always *dynamic and diverse*. The process, therefore, must make allowances for different temperaments.¹⁰⁷ God knows the unity and diversity among His people and deals with each of us uniquely.¹⁰⁸ Since our temperaments differ, we should be sensitive to the different spiritual paths that are possible for each of us.¹⁰⁹ At the same time, there is a need to be cautious so that we do not grow lopsided, emphasizing only one area of spiritual growth that comes more naturally to us.¹¹⁰ True spiritual formation involves “the whole of Christ’s image” being impressed upon the soul.¹¹¹ In this process our inner character, consisting of our thoughts, emotions, and will, is brought to conform to the inner character of Jesus.¹¹²

Factors that Facilitate Spiritual Formation

Before we focus on factors that contribute to spiritual formation, it is important to look at *approaches that do not work*. Since the goal of spiritual formation is to be alive to God and to be like God from the heart, traditional approaches that emphasize exterior religious activities and legalistic law-keeping do not work.¹¹³ Just trying harder to keep

¹⁰⁷ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 142.

¹⁰⁸ This is not to say that there are no common or shared elements in the process of spiritual formation. But the point here is that the process is not rigid or impersonal. The process, by its very nature, is the one that takes account of each person’s unique background, temperament and needs.

¹⁰⁹ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 49-56; Lawrenz, *The dynamics of spiritual formation*, 27.

¹¹⁰ Lawrenz, *The dynamics of spiritual formation*, 27.

¹¹¹ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 157.

¹¹² Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 31.

¹¹³ Crabb, *Inside Out*, 17-24; Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*, 7-9, 18-24.

the law, to avoid sin, or to follow religious rituals does not bring about the change that God desires. Merely asking, “What would Jesus do?” will also not work because we do not have the resources to understand, nor to do, what Jesus did.¹¹⁴ Even being active in church ministries or being involved in social services may not affect one’s heart at all. Talking about God and showing enthusiastic displays of emotion do not change a person either. Not even spiritual or charismatic experiences are indicators of spiritual formation.¹¹⁵ Such approaches seem attractive because they involve aspects of true spiritual life. However, the problem is they do not go deep enough. Their effect is temporary because they fail to affect the whole of Christian life. Moreover, they focus on us, on our own self-righteousness, not on God.¹¹⁶

Factor 1: What God Has Done For Us

What makes spiritual formation possible is *what God has done for us*. He has saved us through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. When we were God’s enemies, Christ died for us.¹¹⁷ This is salvation, conversion, justification, regeneration, union with Christ, adoption, forgiveness, baptism, and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit. All of this is possible now.

¹¹⁴ Willard, *Spirit of Disciplines*, 3-6.

¹¹⁵ White, *The Pathway of Holiness*, 91; Crabb, *Inside Out*, 17. White, who promotes charismatic movement, admits that the empowering ministry of the Spirit may have some ‘sanctifying spinoffs, but they do not sanctify’

¹¹⁶ Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*, 10-12.

¹¹⁷ Romans 5:8.

With Regards to Our Position

What God has done for us in terms of our position/status is to forgive our sins and to remove the guilt of sin from our lives. He has given us the righteousness of Christ and has removed that lack from us. He has clothed us with Christ, adopted us, and given us the Spirit of “sonship” that we might have the status of the children of God.¹¹⁸ We are no longer God’s enemies but children of God, the holy people of God who will live with Him eternally. In a real sense, the old is gone and the new has come.¹¹⁹ The former person, the foreigner and enemy of God, is no more. He has been crucified with Christ.¹²⁰

However, we are not fully convinced that our lives have changed. In spite of God’s effort to grant us the gift of righteousness, we do not feel righteous and are tempted to try to earn God’s approval. The message of the gospel seems too good to be true. We must realize that it is true and, with the help of the Holy Spirit, believe the unbelievable.¹²¹

With Regards to Our Nature

What God has done for us, in terms of *our nature*, is to give us a new heart born of the Spirit of God. God’s laws have been written upon our hearts.¹²² The new heart cries out for Abba-God and is able to love God, to relate to God, to delight in God. We desire to surrender to Him, to depend on Him, to gaze on His beauty, and to understand

¹¹⁸ Romans 8:21-25.

¹¹⁹ 1 Corinthians 5:17.

¹²⁰ Romans 6:6.

¹²¹ Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship*, 83.

¹²² Jeremiah 31:31.

Him. This is the core of our being, of what we are and of what we have become. We are born of God -- new in position and in nature. Not only *can* we enter into the presence of God because of our new position, but we *want* to enter into God's presence and gaze upon His beauty. We want to be like God in our souls.

It is critical for us to understand what God has done for us in terms of our nature because only in this way can we approach God. We are living a new life. We are delighting in God's word, living from the heart and walking in the spirit.¹²³

However, there is a problem in all this: our ignorance and unbelief. We had been living apart from God, following our own thoughts, feelings, and desires so that it seems strange to believe that we can think, feel, and desire differently. This new heart, new understanding and new way of relating to God and to the world was not meant to be an occasional experience but a new way of life. The life in the Spirit is to be the norm for us, not the sinful desires and thoughts of our former lives.¹²⁴ God expects and commands us to use what He has given us.

It is vital to understand what God has done for us so that we do not attempt to do things that only God can do. If we do, we will be frustrated and miss out on the "real thing." We cannot, of ourselves, make ourselves acceptable to God; we cannot earn the right to be in His presence, nor can we create our own affection for God. These are things that only God can do. We are called to play a significant part in our spiritual formation, but it is dangerous to misunderstand our part. Our tragedy is failing to do what we can do, and the result is stunted growth and spiritual *deformation*.

¹²³ Nouwen, *Reaching Out*, 145-146.

¹²⁴ Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work in You*, 65-84.

Factor 2: What God Has Made Possible for Us

Not only has God provided us with a new position and a new nature but He has also provided everything we need for “life and godliness.”¹²⁵ The second set of factors critical for our spiritual formation is made up of all the things that God has made possible for us through Christ. We make the mistake, on the one hand, of attempting to do things that God has already done for us, and, on the other hand, of failing to know and/or do the things that God made possible for us to do.

First, God has made *His presence* possible to us. A heart enthroned by God, a heart that rests humbly, joyfully, willingly, transparently in the presence of God will bring about real change in a person.¹²⁶ The person whose affections and love are captured by the beauty of God will live out his love and affections.¹²⁷ “Nothing makes us more holy and transformed than the presence of God – confronting the glory of God.”¹²⁸ That sounds paradoxical since the presence of God is the goal of spiritual formation, and now it is being presented as the *means* of spiritual formation. This is because the goal of spiritual formation is the very path of spiritual formation. Resting humbly and joyfully in the presence of God will lead to an ever deeper life of resting in God. The more a person beholds the beauty of God, the more a person will be captured by His beauty. The process is never-ending.

Jesus’ command to remain in Him in John 15 reveals one of the most significant insights into the means of spiritual formation. As branches cannot bear fruit apart from

¹²⁵ 2 Peter 1:3.

¹²⁶ Bridges, *Practice of Godliness*, 75.

¹²⁷ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 78.

¹²⁸ Anderson and Saucy, *God’s Power at Work in You*, 18.

vitally remaining in the vine, we will not be able to bear any spiritual fruit apart from vitally remaining in Jesus. He is to be the source of our spiritual life and fruitfulness. The most essential and urgent need for the branches, before anything else, is to remain in the vine. Jesus clarifies the meaning of “remaining in Him” in the same chapter by urging His disciples to remain in His words and in His love.¹²⁹ Remaining in Christ means to remain in the gracious relationship with Him characterized by His love and His word. It is this relationship of grace which feeds our soul with His love and truth will bring about spiritual transformation. “Our relationship with God, not our doing, is the source of our being.”¹³⁰ The central duty for us, therefore, is to make every effort to remain in Christ whereby we are nurtured and shaped by His presence.

God has also given us *new hearts and new abilities*. This idea cannot be emphasized enough. The reality of the gospel is staggering. We are now the children of God, born of God’s spirit. We now have a new disposition, a new orientation and propensity toward God. We are capable of knowing God, loving God, and serving God. We delight in Him, trust Him, and fear Him. A whole new way of life has been opened to us.¹³¹

God has also given is *the Holy Spirit*. The Holy Spirit is the very presence of God in us.¹³² He is the one who gives us new birth, a new heart and a new mind. He is the one who convicts and illuminates our hearts concerning God’s word. He is the one who leads us to live in the new way of the kingdom of God. He is the Spirit of truth, the Spirit of power, and the Spirit of holiness. The Holy Spirit is the key to our spiritual

¹²⁹ John 15:7,9.

¹³⁰ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 30.

¹³¹ 1 John 2:20-27;1 Peter 1:8-9; Ephesians 2:10; Ezekiel 36:26; Jeremiah 31:33-34.

¹³² Fee, *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God*, 9-14.

formation. His work in us is essential for the process of spiritual formation going on within us.¹³³

God has given us *His word*. The word and the Spirit work hand in hand. The Spirit of God now illuminates the word in our hearts so that we may know the heart of God. In hearing the word, we receive faith, the assurance to claim victory over the devil.¹³⁴ It is the word that ushers us into the very presence of God.¹³⁵ Meditating on the word of God is a key to a life of blessedness¹³⁶ leading us into deeper prayer and service of others. Through His word, God has given us THE way of fellowship with Himself by knowing Him and abiding in Jesus through His word. Hiding God's word in our hearts will keep us from sinning¹³⁷ and make us fruitful.¹³⁸

God has given us a *life of community*. Since His own nature is a community, God has granted us to live in a community that will reflect His own holiness. Spiritual friendships, discipleship, mentoring and mutual accountability are possible in a community and are indispensable in the process of spiritual formation. Indeed, change is a community project.¹³⁹ Community life also provides a structure for spiritual discipline and practical Christian living. Living in community is an important means of grace as a vehicle of spiritual growth.¹⁴⁰ Jesus established His church on earth and appointed "some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service so that the body of Christ [could]

¹³³ Bennett, *Intentional Discipleship Making*, 19; Baker, *Sanctification*, 65-92; Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship*, 113.

¹³⁴ Piper, *Desiring God*, 124-130.

¹³⁵ David E. Ross, *A Table Before Me: A Meditating Christian* (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2007), 82.

¹³⁶ Psalm 1.

¹³⁷ Psalm 119: 11.

¹³⁸ John 15:71

¹³⁹ Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*, 62-78.

¹⁴⁰ Ryle, *Holiness*, 89.

be built up.”¹⁴¹

God grants us *suffering and adversity* to humble us, to correct us, and to perfect us. Our spiritual formation does not rescue us from suffering. Suffering, that we do not choose for ourselves, is the discipline of God and is used by Him to shatter our idols and our false sense of security. In fact, God used the wilderness to show that He would carry His people.¹⁴² Suffering is the opportunity given us to experience God’s deliverance and forgiveness. It directs us to greater dependence, humility, trust, surrender and hope.¹⁴³

It is incredible that this new life in God and suffering are connected. No part of this new life can be considered in isolation. God has given us many powerful means to spiritual formation: His presence, His word, the Holy Spirit, and suffering. It is necessary for us to realize that these gifts are actual possibilities for us to live a full life in Him. We must not ignore what God has provided for us and seek to be spiritually formed on our own. In fact, many find these gifts too difficult and settle for a superficial Christian life. We need to let God do for us what we cannot do for ourselves. We also need to respond to what God gives us. This is the grace of God.

Factor 3: Our Response

Inner Workings of Our Response

Our first response to what God has done for us is a *personal* response of humility,

¹⁴¹ Ephesians 4:11-13.

¹⁴² Lane and Tripp, *How People Change*, 114.

¹⁴³ Anderson and Saucy, *God’s Power at Work in You*, 303-307; Baker, *Sanctification*, 104-108; Piper, *Desiring God*, 215, 222.

honesty, and transparency. We are not, primarily, responding to a set of facts. We are responding to God who stands at the door of our hearts. We need to face Him honestly, to look to Him Humbly, and to stand before Him transparently.¹⁴⁴ Our first response to intimacy with God will provide the foundation for all of our subsequent responses of commitment and training.

Our personal response of humility, honesty and transparency is possible because of *the gospel of Jesus*. We need to come to terms with God's love for us. Our response is not only to God Himself but also what He has done for us. "Your worst days are never so bad that you are beyond the reach of God's grace. And your best days are never so good that you are beyond the need of God's grace."¹⁴⁵ Our response is to accept God's acceptance of us. It is to embrace His forgiveness and to believe that God in Christ loves us and that nothing will separate us from His love. This response to the gospel can change us from the inside. It produces an unusual person who is both humble and confident, compassionate and holy, and free and committed. He will have nothing to prove, nothing to hide, and nothing to fear because every aspect of his life is being mediated through the gospel of Jesus.

Our response to God in the face of the gospel leads to *a response of commitment*. Our commitment to follow Christ is necessary for our spiritual formation¹⁴⁶ and the natural consequence of our response to facing God. God's love begets love. We express our love to God by crying out to Him for more of His presence, for more of His truth, and more of His glory.¹⁴⁷ Our response is to follow Christ in all things. If it does not flow

¹⁴⁴ Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship*, 112.

¹⁴⁵ Bridges, *Disciplines of Grace*, 18.

¹⁴⁶ Bridges, *Practice of Godliness*, 44; Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 87-89; Crabb, *Inside Out*, 39.

¹⁴⁷ Houston, *The Mentored Life*, 116-117.

from worship and love, it then becomes merely an exercise in human attainment divorced from grace. The response of radical commitment means “working out our salvation in fear and trembling, for it is God who is at work in [us].”¹⁴⁸

Each choice that we make in following Christ moves us in a certain direction. We become what we are becoming.¹⁴⁹ A true Christian is a person who “places holy living above everything else. This is his main preoccupation; he is devoted to it with the greatest diligence and earnestness.”¹⁵⁰ His response of love will cost his sins, his self-righteousness, his comfort and worldly favor. The commitment will then lead to repentance and mortification of sins. True repentance flows from faith and love, rooted in the gracious work of the Holy Spirit.¹⁵¹ At the heart of repentance is humility before God which keeps us on the path of spiritual formation. Humble repentance is the turning point¹⁵² where sins are identified and put to death.¹⁵³ Mortification is our response to God’s grace; by it we deal with all indwelling sin and its root desires.¹⁵⁴ The motivation toward repentance is the “expulsive power of the new principle of grace.”¹⁵⁵

Understanding Spiritual Disciplines

How can what God has done for us bring about change in our lives? How can we receive all that God has made possible for us? The answer is *spiritual disciplines*.

¹⁴⁸ Philippians 2:12.

¹⁴⁹ Raymond Causey, *Changing for good: practical steps for breaking your negative patterns* (Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity Press, 2002), 9; Bridges, *Disciplines of Grace*, 185-187.

¹⁵⁰ Edwards, *Religious Affections*, 167.

¹⁵¹ White, *The Pathway of Holiness*, 63.

¹⁵² Petersen, *Lifestyle Discipleship*, 112-113.

¹⁵³ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 82-83.

¹⁵⁴ Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace*, 193.

¹⁵⁵ Ryle, *Holiness*, 5.

Spiritual disciplines are the means by which we enter into the grace that God has given us and what make our responses of humility and commitment authentic.

Spiritual disciplines are *disciplines of grace*.¹⁵⁶ They flow from the Holy Spirit. Our role, therefore, is to direct our hearts to God so that the Holy Spirit can do for us, what we cannot do by ourselves.¹⁵⁷ The key, according to Baxter, is to place ourselves within the influence of the Spirit.¹⁵⁸ White concurs, “we could go on forever discussing the qualities of sanctification, but to do so is a waste of time. It gets our eye on ourselves and on performance -- *our* performance – rather than on Christ.”¹⁵⁹ Focusing on God is the spirit of the disciplines. In fact, Tan and Gregg refer specifically to spiritual disciplines, as the very means of being filled with the Spirit.¹⁶⁰

Peterson refers to the rhythm of spiritual life as the “middle voice” *actively participating in what is being done to us*.¹⁶¹ We are not in charge; we are not the main players. God is. However, we do play a significant role in our spiritual formation, and our role is to be attentive and responsive to what God is doing. “On one hand we can do nothing apart from God. But we can and should be everything that He has allowed us to be.”¹⁶²

The focus of spiritual disciplines ought not to be the disciplines but God Himself.¹⁶³ By themselves, they are worthless or even harmful, making them vehicles of legalism and self-righteousness.¹⁶⁴ “Without God’s transforming grace, our disciplines

¹⁵⁶ Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace*, 77-85.

¹⁵⁷ Lawrenz, *The dynamics of spiritual formation*, 137-138.

¹⁵⁸ Baxter, *A New Call to Holiness*, 134-135.

¹⁵⁹ White, *The Pathway of Holiness*, 143.

¹⁶⁰ Tan and Gregg, *Disciplines of the Spirit*, 28-29.

¹⁶¹ Peterson, *Contemplative Pastor*, 102-105.

¹⁶² Anderson and Saucy, *God's Power at Work in You*, 14-16.

¹⁶³ Bridges, *The Disciplines of Grace*, 128.

¹⁶⁴ Richard J. Foster, *Celebration of Discipline: The Pathway to Spiritual Growth*, (New York:

are empty, hollow motions, the forms of godliness without power.”¹⁶⁵ They are, in themselves, *not virtues*, but simply a means for us to be more responsive to what God has done and has made available to us by His grace.

Spiritual disciplines are at the heart of being in God’s presence -- waiting for God, listening for Him, gazing at Him, resting in Him, delighting in Him, and surrendering to Him. They are about abiding in Christ, and need to be understood as the rhythm of a normal Christian life.

Practicing Spiritual Disciplines

Although there is no official list of spiritual disciplines, some *effective spiritual disciplines* are: spiritual reading, prayer, corporate worship, solitude, silence, fasting, study, meditation, confession, and fellowship. By and large, these disciplines are designed to draw us into deeper fellowship with God and deeper knowledge of His word, and to draw *out from us* our sin, idols, greed, selfishness, fear, and pride. They are also designed to *draw us together* as we respond to God corporately and as we serve one another. We are to grow inward, upward, and outward.

Here are lists of disciplines by several authors. They reveal a variety of disciplines as well as diverse ways of categorizing them. Some disciplines are common to all the lists, demonstrating that they are more basic than others.

HarperCollins, 1978), 9-11.

¹⁶⁵ Mulholland, *Invitation to a Journey*, 136.

Table 3.1. List of Spiritual Disciplines from Various Authors

Willard	Ryle	Tan and Gregg	Foster
<u>Disciplines of Abstinence</u>	<u>Private means of grace</u>	<u>Disciplines of Solitude</u>	<u>The Inward Disciplines</u>
- Solitude - Silence - Fasting - Frugality - Chastity - Secrecy - Sacrifice	- Prayer - Word - Meditation - Self-examination	- Solitude and Silence - Listening and Guidance - Prayer and intercession - Study and Meditation	- Meditation - Prayer - Fasting - Study
<u>Disciplines of Engagement</u>	<u>Public means of grace</u>	<u>Disciplines of Surrender</u>	<u>The Outward Disciplines</u>
- Study - Worship - Celebration - Service - Prayer - Fellowship - Confession - Submission	- Regular Sunday worship - Prayer together - Praise - Preaching of the Word - Sacraments	- Repentance and Confession - Yielding and Submission - Fasting - Worship	- Simplicity - Solitude - Submission - Service
	<u>Other</u>	<u>Disciplines of Service</u>	<u>The Corporate Disciplines</u>
	- Watchfulness over our conducts in the little matters of everyday life... - Company we keep - Regular fellowship with Jesus	- Fellowship - Simplicity - Service - Witness	- Confession - Worship - Guidance - Celebration
Thompson	Nouwen	Lawrenz	Mulholland
- Spiritual Reading - Prayer - Worship - Fasting - Confession - Spiritual Direction - Hospitality	- Solitude - Silence - Prayer - Hospitality - Confession - Theological Reflection	- Formative reading - Formative Prayer - Formative Worship - Formative Fellowship - Formative Preaching - Formative Service	<u>Prayer</u> <u>Lectio Divina</u> - Silencio - Lectio - Meditatio - Oratio - Contemplatio - Incarnatio
			<u>Liturgy</u> - Worship - Daily Office - Study - Fasting - Retreat

Because the spirit of the disciplines noted here is the love through Jesus, they reflect resolve, commitment, and attentiveness. Above all, they are not meant to be

legalistic or mechanical. They are a means to a full life in Jesus. Some need to be followed regularly, providing for the basic, constant spiritual rhythm. Others can be used as needed for specific occasions. Bridges, for example, recommends memorizing and meditating on certain Biblical texts that pertain to a particular issue and putting into practice the disciplines that relate specifically to the issue at hand.¹⁶⁶

As a general principle, we need to plan ahead. Doing a spiritual discipline will not automatically change the pattern of our lives. Often spiritual disciplines need to be used “off the spot” or ahead of time. Like other things in our lives, there are times when we cannot do the disciplines “on the spot” at a regular time. What we can do is to train ourselves “off the spot” so that we will be able to do later what we cannot do now by our direct effort.¹⁶⁷ The aim, eventually, is to walk with Jesus, and that involves “living as he lived in the entirety of his life -- adopting his overall life-style.... To live as Christ lived is to live as he did *all* his life.”¹⁶⁸

What we desire is to be so close to God that His mind, affections, will, and emotions “rub off” onto us. These disciplines are the paths which many saints have traveled before us in following the Master; and they fill us with wonder and delight. If we would be closer to God, if we would be more like Jesus, then we should spend time in the disciplines.

Conclusion

What we really need is God. More than any other need that a human being can

¹⁶⁶ Bridges, *The Practice of Godliness*, 102.

¹⁶⁷ Willard, *Renovation of the Heart*, 90-91.

¹⁶⁸ Willard, *Spirit of Discipline*, 5.

experience, the need for God is vital. We need God because God is our maker, life-giver, sustainer, and our first love. He is the source of our laughter, the reason for our existence. There is no substitute for God. Without Him we walk around with a gaping hole in our hearts. Separation from God is the root of all the evil and suffering in the world. All of our character malformations, relational breakdowns, deformed self-esteem, addictions, and wars are rooted in our enmity against God. What we need the most is God.

God has provided what we need the most, Himself. This is the gospel of God. He has provided a way to stay right with Him. He has made a way so our hearts will not hide from Him, cheat Him , hate Him, or blame Him anymore but will actually cause us to love, trust, delight, confess, surrender, and receive Him eagerly. What we really need, God has provided Himself.

It is a shame that we do not realize what we have or where we stand this very moment in Christ. It is sad that we waste the glory, peace, wisdom, and the friendship that can be ours. He, Himself, has made it possible to be right with Him. What we can do is to fall in love. He has shown us how: spiritual formation.

CHAPTER FOUR

DEVELOPING AN UNDERGRADUATE ACADEMIC COURSE ON SPIRITUAL FORMATION FOR A CHRISTIAN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTION

Description of the Project

The project for this thesis is an academic course designed on spiritual formation for undergraduate students at Handong Global University, a Christian university located in Pohang, S. Korea. It will supplement the academic curriculum and present a Christian worldview for the students as graduates, to change the world for Christ. Approximately 70% of the students are Christian, and 30% are either of another faith or have no faith.

A careful examination of Handong Global University's Christian core curriculum revealed a weakness in the areas of spirituality and practical Christian life. No course at present covers topics on spiritual growth, sanctification or living the Christian life. The development of a course on spiritual formation is, therefore, appropriate at this time:

Introduction to Christian Spiritual Formation. The course is planned as a two credit class meeting 100 minutes once a week for 16 weeks per semester. The ideal class size is 25 which allows for effective communication, discussion and mentoring, but class size will, of necessity, be set for 60. Students will be expected to spend 2 hours per week on the assignments and readings required for this course. The course syllabus for the students is in the appendix of this chapter which includes the course description, outcomes, learning tools, lesson plans and assessment tools.

Course Design

Course Description

In this course, we will investigate the nature and the process of spiritual formation from Biblical, theological, personal, social, and practical perspectives. The aim of the course is not only to convey information but to engage us so that we can live lives holy and free with God.

This is a short two credit course that will deal with the formation of the human soul and will serve to pique interest, point the way, and introduce a life-long process of “becoming more like our Lord Jesus.”

The course is taught with conviction from Christian experience. The Bible is the text that will give us a firm basis for understanding and experiencing the kind of spiritual formation that God has called us to embrace.

Course Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to clearly articulate the vision of Christian Spiritual Formation.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge regarding the basic theological framework undergirding Christian Spiritual Formation.
3. Students will understand the overall process of spiritual formation and be able to identify key factors that contribute to its process.
4. Students will have a greater understanding of the proper function and the value of spiritual disciplines and will begin to make appropriate use of them in their individual personal development.

5. Students will develop an increased sense of personal identity and calling, and will have a greater awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.

Comments

Outcome 1: Vision of Spiritual Formation

The first outcome focuses on students gaining a clear understanding of what spiritual formation is. Having a proper understanding of the vision is critical since this determines the direction of one's attention and effort. The vision poses the question, "What kind of person *ought* I be?" Having a skewed or inadequate vision of spiritual formation will foil the process from the start. Inadequate visions are often characterized by self-righteousness, self-centeredness, emphasis on the external appearances, and an individualism that excludes meaningful relationships with God and with others.

The proper vision for spiritual formation comes from God. It is not determined by our own preferences, but has been given by God and must be rooted in the Scriptures. Its goals are: God-centeredness, Godlikeness, inner transformation, formation of the whole person, and the ability to sustain an intimate relationship with God.

Key Concepts. These are the key concepts that students need to understand to fulfill outcome #1:

- 2 Aspects of Godliness and Holiness
- God-Centeredness
- Inner transformation
- Image of Christ
- Whole of life
- Character

Freedom
Intimacy
Dependence
Lordship

Outcome 2: Theological Framework of Spiritual Formation

The second outcome focuses on students understanding the theological framework rooted in the Scriptures that undergirds all discussions concerning spiritual formation. Students should be able to answer basic questions related to spiritual formation: “Why should I be spiritually formed?” “What is the Biblical vision of spiritual formation?” “What is the process of spiritual formation?”

The theological framework that students are to acquire focuses on three major themes: creation, the fall, and salvation. The doctrine of creation provides information related to the vision of spiritual formation, the ultimate reality. The doctrine of the fall identifies the heart of human problems wherein lies the source of our deformation. The doctrine of salvation clarifies the vision of spiritual formation and establishes the basis for true spiritual life. No true spiritual formation is possible unless we know and respond to these theological realities.

What we need is the “big picture” to fully appreciate what spiritual formation is and how it relates to in with salvation as a whole. Effective spiritual formation cannot take place from perspectives rooted in pride, guilt, or fear.

Key Concepts. The aim of this course is to ensure that students will have a clear understanding of:

The sovereignty of God

The place and the dignity of humanity
The nature of sin
What God has done to save and to change us through Christ.

Outcome 3: Process of Spiritual Formation

Spiritual formation is a process undergone by saints throughout the history of the church. The third outcome focuses on the student's ability to identify and reject false understandings related to the process of spiritual formation and to appreciate and comprehend the "true process" of spiritual formation. Some false understandings of this process include the belief that spiritual formation is not possible. That is why many give up on spiritual growth and settle for merely performing external religious practices. Others believe that spiritual formation is magical; that by some spectacular experience, they can be transformed into a reflection of God's goodness. Still others believe that spiritual formation happens automatically without any understanding or effort on their part.

Speaking out against these false understandings of the process of spiritual formation is the aim of this course. Students will learn how to evaluate the process that God has made possible for them as it is presented in the gospel of Jesus Christ. It is a process of knowing, receiving and responding to the grace of God through the active ministry of the Holy Spirit who regenerates, convicts, illuminates and teaches the hearts of believers.

Key Concepts. These are some of the key concepts that the students should understand as a result of this course related to outcome three:

What God has done for us in the gospel of Jesus
What God has made possible for us in the gospel of Jesus
God's role and our role in the process of spiritual formation
The ministry of the Holy Spirit
Human system related to the mind, will, emotion, body and the social relationships

Outcome 4: Spiritual Disciplines

The fourth learning outcome focuses on the students attaining the “proper” understanding and practice of the spiritual disciplines, our appropriate responses to God’s sovereign grace. Students will be able to discern the relationship between God’s grace and our disciplines, and will be able to appreciate their benefits.

The students will also be introduced to classic spiritual disciplines that have been widely used in the church. They will come to know how they function and will practice them by following the disciplines of Bible meditation, solitude, silence and prayer.

As a part of this course, each student will be assigned a specific spiritual discipline according to his/her particular need and will develop a “rule of life” based on various spiritual disciplines.

Key Concepts. These are some key concepts that will be taught in the fourth learning outcome.

Definitions of spiritual disciplines
The aim of spiritual disciplines
Proper place and functions of spiritual disciplines
The necessity of spiritual disciplines

Outcome 5: Personal Spiritual Journey

The outcomes in this course focus less on intellectual comprehension than on the

actual spiritual formation beginning to take place in the lives of the students. This course seeks to contribute to each student's spiritual journey toward being formed into the image of Christ. Students will also be reflecting, taking a personal inventory and developing a personal rule of life throughout the semester. These exercises are designed to help each student to apply key concepts in their own spiritual formation.

Key Concepts.

Three callings for all Christians
Rule of life
How truth must be lived

Learning Tools

Lectures

There will be 80 minutes of lecture given each week. Lectures will be used to trigger thoughts, to raise questions and to communicate the key concepts in each lesson, and are the best way to ensure that all the topics in this course are covered. A clear outline of the lecture will be displayed throughout the lecture to focus the attention of students and lecturer. In order to be effective, the material presented and the style of each lecture will be through-provoking, relational and interactive.

Classes will allow time for questions and answers after each lecture. Students will also be given time for 15 minutes of reflection after each lecture in order to process, organize and record insights and personal applications that arise from the lecture. A guideline, including questions that arise from the lectures, for reflection will also be given out each week.

Figure 4.1. Reflective Writing After the Lecture

Name:

Student ID:

Date:

1. Summary of today's lecture:

2. Key concepts that I need to understand and to remember:

3. Some ideas that I need to think about further:

4. Personal applications:

5. Questions:

Required Readings

Selected chapters from the required reading list will be assigned to the students; these chapters will correspond to the topic covered each week. Students are expected to write a brief summary with reflections on these readings.

Figure 4.2. Reflections from the Reading

Name:

Student ID:

Date:

1. Brief summary/outline of the chapter:

2. Highlights: What are some ideas that intrigued you? Why?

3. Personal application: How does the reading relate to you personally?

4. What are some questions about or comments on the reading that you have?

Table 4.1. Reading Assignments

Due Date	The Assigned Reading
Week 2 9/12	David E. Ross, “A Simple Method for Biblical Meditation” and “The Meaning of Meditation” in <i>A Table Before Me: A Meditating Christian</i> (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2007).
Week 3 9/19	Dallas Willard and Don Simpson, “A Revolution Has Begun” in <i>Revolution of Character: Discovering Christ’s Pattern for Spiritual Transformation</i> (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2008).
Week 4 9/26	Scott Hafemann, “Why Do We Exist?” in <i>The God of Promise and the Life of Faith: Understanding the Heart of the Bible</i> . (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001).
Week 5 10/3	J.C. Ryle, “Sin” in <i>Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots</i> . (Durham, England: Evangelical Press, 1979).
Week 6 10/10	Clifford Williams, “Motives Undermining the Singleness of Heart” in <i>Singleness of Heart: Restoring the Divided Soul</i> . (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1994).
Week 7 10/17	Jerry Bridges, “Preach the Gospel to Yourself” in <i>The Disciplines of Grace: God’s Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness</i> . (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1994).
Week 8 10/25	Neil T. Anderson and Robert L. Saucy, “Our new freedom in Christ” in <i>God’s Power at Work In You</i> . (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 2001).
Week 9 10/31	Gordon D. Fee, “Conversion: Getting In (Part 2), The Spirit as the Entry Point” in <i>Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God</i> . (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996).
Week 10 11/7	Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, “Introduction: Discovering Your Desires” in <i>Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us</i> . (Downers Groves: IL, IVP Press, 2005).
Week 11 11/14	Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, “Rule for Life” in <i>Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us</i> . (Downers Groves: IL, IVP Press, 2005).
Week 12 11/21	Dallas Willard and Don Simpson, “The Heart, Center of Our Life” and “The Battle for Our Thought Life.”
Week 13 11/28	Dallas Willard and Don Simpson, “Educating Our Feelings” and “The Body, Our Primary Ally.” in <i>Revolution of Character: Discovering Christ’s Pattern for Spiritual Transformation</i> (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2008).

Week 14 12/5	Dallas Willard and Don Simpson, "Transforming Our Character" and "Changing How We Relate to Others." in <i>Revolution of Character: Discovering Christ's Pattern for Spiritual Transformation</i> (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2008).
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Bible Meditation

Since daily Bible meditation will be assigned as an integral part of this course, students are expected to spend 15-30 minutes each day as they reflect, pray, and journal in response to the Word of God. This exercise will help them develop a daily rhythm of "hiding God's word in the heart" and being alone with God. Along with Bible meditation, the students will practice solitude, silence, and prayer.

As an aid in meditation, students will be given reading assignments that will instruct them in the value, meaning and the ways of Bible mediation. A portion of the class lecture will also be devoted to this topic so that students will be well prepared for the assignment. At the end of each week, students will record a brief description of the time and place of each day's mediation on the CIS-board.¹

Table 4.2. Sample Meditation Report

Sample

Name: John Doe
Student ID: 12345
Date of submission: 9/24/12

Week 1

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Yes or No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes

¹ CIS board is an on-line class site where students can receive and hand in assignments, lecture notes, reading materials, and take exams. Since the personal journals with prayers and reflections should not be read by the instructor, the grade for this exercise will be based on whether students spent time doing the mediations, not on the quality of the meditation. Furthermore, this work assumes that students will follow the "Handong Honor Code" which trusts they will act honorably and record their work honestly. The honor code is applied throughout the university, and no exams at HGU are proctored.

Time	9:30pm til 9:45pm	7am to 7:30am		7am to 7:30am	7am to 7:30am		1pm to 2pm
Place	My Room	Prayer walk around the school		Chapel	Chapel		Downtown Starbucks
Comment		I realized that God is truly great		I just went through the motion			It was a really good time

Personal Development Project

Personal History Survey

Students will fill out a brief personal history survey at the beginning of this project. The survey will cover questions related to family background, people who influenced them, significant events in their lives, and their relationship with God, as well as the area of their lives that they would like to see changed. Students will also be asked to fill out a “Lifeline Graph” on which they will mark the high points and the low points of their lives.

This survey will help students gain insights into their own lives which can lead to spiritual growth. Such information will also help the instructor to pray for each student.

Figure 4.3. Personal Spiritual History Survey

Name:

Student ID:

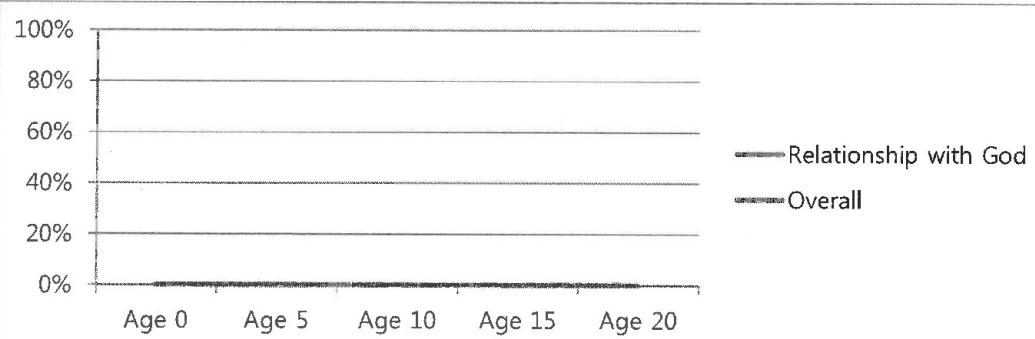
Date:

1. What was your childhood like? Please describe your family and your relationship with your family members.

2. Who influenced you the most? In what ways?

3. How would you describe your relationship with God?

4. What questions do you have regarding the topic of spiritual formation / personal change?
5. What area of your life do you want to see change/growth in?
6. Life Graph: Mark the high points and the low points of your life and your relationship with God. Make notice of the turning points.



Personal Interviews

The instructor will meet with each student to go over the personal historical survey. During the interview, the instructor will listen attentively to, and dialogue with, the student regarding the area of change that he/she would like to experience in his life. The purpose of the interview is to pay attention to the prompting of the Spirit in discovering those areas where the student could be having difficulty. An appropriate spiritual discipline will then be assigned to the student, one that is designed to help him/her according to specific need. The student will also keep a journal of his/her spiritual discipline and record the progress throughout the semester. There will also be a brief “check-up” interview in the middle of the semester and a final interview.

Reflection Paper

At the end of the course, each student will be required to submit a reflection paper regarding his/her personal development project.

Figure 4.4. Reflection Paper Questions

Name:

Student ID:

Date:

What was most significant to you as you worked through this project?

How would you rate your effort and commitment to the project? (Out of 10; 10 being the best.)

Do you think the spiritual discipline(s) that was suggested to you was appropriate? What did you find difficult about this discipline? What did you find rewarding about it?

What questions or comments do you have regarding your personal growth related to this project and how will you live differently in the future?

Developing a Personal Rule of Life

During the course, each student will have developed his/her own “rule of life.” This has been defined as “... a pattern of spiritual disciplines that provides structure and direction for growth in holiness.”² The aim of the course is not merely to communicate information about spiritual formation and the factors that contribute to its development, but to help students put into practice what they have learned and to instill in them a new

² Marjorie J. Thompson, *Soul Feast: An Invitation to the Christian Spiritual Life*, 2nd ed. (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox Press, 2005), 148.

way of living responsively to God. The main factor leading to spiritual growth is the grace of God, and it is only through spiritual discipline that we remain in the grace of God.

The rule of life that each student develops will continue to be an effective learning tool that will stay with him/her after the course. This appears to be an appropriate way to conclude the course on spiritual formation. Each student will develop a rule of life with the guidance of various authors and the instructor. This will be a personal commitment and a genuine motivation for the student. This rule of life will be internal, not imposed from without, and it will be rooted in the intimate knowledge of the student.

Each student will also be assigned a chapter from Calhoun's *Spiritual Formation Handbook* which will become a practical guide for developing his/her rule of life.

Table 4.3. Sample Rule of Life

Sample Rule of Life³

Pope John XXIII

Fifteen minutes of silent prayer upon rising in the morning

Fifteen minutes of spiritual reading

Before bed, a general examination of conscience followed by confession; then identifying issues for the next morning's prayer

Dorothy Day

Receiving Communion Daily

Reading the Bible daily

Keeping a journal daily

Seeing Christ in the face of the poor

Catherine de Hueck Doherty (Founder of Madonna House in Ontario, Canada)

³ Thompson, *Soul Feast*, 150.

Monthly retreat into silence and solitude for a twenty-four-hour period

John the HGU Student

Spending 30 minutes each day after lunch in a prayer walk with God
Once a week, talking with one person I do not know well, with no other intention than to bless, to pray (inside) and to serve
Fasting one meal every Monday and secretly give the money someone in need

Table 4.4. Some Questions and Comments to Guide the Writing of the Rule of Life

Some questions and comments to guide the writing of the rule of life

1. What are your preferred spiritual disciplines? Why do you prefer them? How helpful are these disciplines for your spiritual growth?
2. What spiritual disciplines do you shrink from? Why?
Do you think some of the disciplines that you shrink from will nonetheless help you to grow spiritually? Which ones? Why do you think so?
3. Take some time to pray to the Lord regarding your lifestyle and ask the Lord to guide you in developing a rule of life.
4. Make a list of spiritual disciplines that you feel will benefit your relationship with God the most. See to it that your list is balanced between the ones that you prefer and the ones that you shrink from.
5. Be realistic. A rule of life is not about living an ideal life but about living an actual, transforming life. You can add/modify your rule of life as you grow. You can start with the first 1 or 2 items in your list and go from there.

Course Outline

Week 1: Introduction to the Course

Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
A. Course Description	Students...
B. Learning Outcomes	1. Will become more familiarized with each other and with the instructor.

C. Learning tools D. Course Outline E. Assessment and class requirements F. Assignment for next week G. Q&A	2. Will have a clear understanding of this course with respect to: The course description The course outcome The course learning tools The course outline The course assessment tools The assignment for next week. 3. Will be excited about what they will learn and experience in this course and will be motivated to invest in the learning process required by this course. 4. Will begin to think thoughts related to spiritual formation and raise personal issues and questions about their own spiritual formation.
Assignments	
1. Read and write reflections on David E. Ross' "A Simple Method for Biblical Meditation" and "The Meaning of Meditation." 2. Complete <i>Personal History Survey</i> (2 weeks for this assignment)	

Week 2: Definitions of Spiritual Formation	
Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
A. What is "Character?" B. Definition of Spiritual Formation 1) Process 2) Of being conformed 3) Into the image of Christ 4) For the sake of God and for others C. Teachings on Bible Meditation 1) What is Bible Meditation? 2) Why should we meditate on God's Word? 3) How do we meditate?	Students... 1. Will have a clear understanding of what human character is. 2. Will reflect on the character that they possess now. Will discern what they have become rather than believe in what they imagine themselves to be 3. Will begin to understand the nature of spiritual formation. They will have: proper goal of spiritual formation proper appreciation of the nature of process

	proper perspective of our role in the process.
Assignments	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read and write reflections on Dallas Willard and Don Simpson's "A Revolution Has Begun." 2. Sign up for a <i>Personal Interview</i> with Pastor Young Ho for <i>Personal Development Project</i>. 3. <i>Bible Meditation</i>. Meditate on Ps.1 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS. 	

Week 3: Visions for Spiritual Formation	
Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
I. Vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Godliness and Holiness B. The greatest commandment C. Freedom and Happiness D. Solitude – Community- Ministry E. "Gracious relationship of intimacy, dependence, and Lordship of God that results in freedom and holiness" II. Comments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. The vision has to come from God. B. Spiritual formation has to do with the heart. C. Spiritual formation must shape the whole person. D. The vision is for the characteristic, lasting change. E. The vision is relational at the core. 	Students... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will have clear understanding of the appropriate vision for spiritual formation. 2. Will recognize and reject wrong/inadequate visions for spiritual formation. 3. Will be able to understand and explain these key concepts: Godliness Holiness Freedom Happiness Heart – whole person – inner change Characteristic Intimacy Dependence Lordship Relationship God.
Assignments	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Read and write reflections on Scott Hafemann's "Why Do We Exist?" 2. Sign up for a <i>Personal Interview</i> with Pastor Young Ho for the <i>Personal Development Project</i>. 	

3. Personal History Survey DUE TODAY

4. Bible Meditation. Meditate on Ps. 139: 1-7 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.

<i>Week 4: Theological Foundations for Spiritual Formation 1: Creation</i>	
Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
A. Supremacy of God B. Place of Humanity C. Doctrine of Creation Provides a Basis for Understanding Humanity D. Implications for Spiritual Formation	Students... 1. Will begin to have a God-centered orientation towards all of life, including their self-understanding. 2. Will have a clear understanding of the place, dignity and the purpose of human life. 3. Will appreciate the value of the doctrine of creation as a basis for understanding of whole of human life. 4. Students will be able to understand and explain these key concepts: Absolute greatness and goodness of God The glory of Humanity Image of God Kingdom of God.
Assignments	
1. Read and write reflections on J.C. Ryle's "Sin." 2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Meditate on Ps. 139:8-14 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.	

<i>Week 5: Theological Foundation for Spiritual Formation 2: The Fall</i>	
Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
A. The Shape of Sin 1) Did God really Say? 2) You will not surely Die. 3) God is not to be trusted as God.	Students... 1. Will be able to articulate the heart of all Sin and how this leads to all kinds of expressions of sins.

B. The Results of Sin 1) Eyes Opened 2) Shame 3) Judgment	2. Will be able to understand how temptation works and will begin to develop a strategy to resist it.
C. The Nature of Sin 1) Definition of Sin 2) The Source of Sin 3) The Extent of Sin 4) Offensiveness of Sin 5) The Dilemma of Sin 6) The Deceit of Sin	3. Will better understand their own sinful condition and will begin to appreciate the help that God provides. 4. Will be able to explain the following key concepts: Independence as the heart of sin Temptation comes through deception We sin because we are sinners Shattered image of God Total depravity The sin beneath all sins.

Assignments

1. Read and write reflections on Clifford Williams' "Motives Undermining the Singleness of Heart."
2. *Bible Meditation.* Meditate on Ps. 139:14-21 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.

<i>Week 6: Further Exploration into Human Sinful Conditions</i>	
Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
A. Our Thirst B. Our Dividedness 1) Ambivalence 2) Illusion 3) Resistance 4) Indifference 5) Compulsive C. Underlying Barriers 1) Desire for reward 2) Fear of disapproval 3) Self-justification 4) Comparison 5) Self-congratulation 6) Impulse to live outside ourselves 7) Imagination	Students... 1. Will be able to appreciate the complex and diverse manifestation of human sinfulness 2. Will have insights into the sinful and divided condition of the human heart. 3. Will be able to identify and recognize the "underlying barriers" in their own lives. 4. Will be able to explain these key concepts: Idolatry Compulsive existence Basic need for significance, security and satisfaction Singleness of the heart.

8) Busyness	
Assignments	
<p>1. Read and write reflections on Jerry Bridges' "Preach the Gospel to Yourself."</p> <p>2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Meditate on Ps. 139:22-24 and John 15:1-4 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>	

<i>Week 7: Theological Foundations for Spiritual Formation 3: Salvation in Christ</i>	
Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
A. Atonement 1) Sacrifice 2) Propitiation 3) Reconciliation 4) Redemption	Students... 1. Will be able understand and articulate the Christian gospel message. 2. Will be able to explain these terms and be able to explain their significance: Atonement Sacrifice Propitiation Reconciliation Redemption Regeneration Justification Adoption.
B. Regeneration	
C. Justification	
D. Adoption	
Assignments	
<p>1. Read and write reflections on Neil T. Anderson and Robert L. Saucy's "Our new freedom in Christ."</p> <p>2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Meditate on John 15:5-11 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>	

<i>Week 8: Living out the salvation in Christ: The Normal Christian Life I.</i>	
Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
A. Vocation: Understanding the three callings upon your life	Students...

<p>B. Gracious relationship with God characterized by intimacy, dependence, and Lordship that results in freedom and holiness</p> <p>Relationship Intimacy Dependence Lordship of God Freedom Holiness</p>	<p>1. Will be clear about their basic calling in life.</p> <p>2. Will have a Biblical perspective on work, rest and worship.</p> <p>3. Will be able to explain the normal Christian life using the following key concepts:</p> <p>Grace Relationship Intimacy Dependence Lordship Results Freedom Holiness</p>
<p>Assignments</p> <p>1. Read and write reflections on Gordon D. Fee's "Conversion: Getting In (Part 2): The Spirit as the Entry Point."</p> <p>2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Meditate on John 15:12-18 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>	

<i>Week 9: The Normal Christian Life 2: Life of Grace</i>	
Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
<p>A. Salvation in Three tenses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Past 2) Present 3) Future 	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will know what they already have in Christ and begin to understand the implications of their identity in Christ.</p>
<p>B. Life of Grace</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Meaning of grace 2) Knowing the grace that is ours 3) How to remain in the grace 4) God's role and our role 5) John 15 	<p>2. Will have an understanding of future grace for the people of God and will begin to shape their current outlook on life.</p> <p>3. Will be able to articulate the meaning and the power of God's grace.</p>
<p>C. Life in the Spirit</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The person of the Holy Spirit 2) His role in salvation: past, present, and future 3) His role in our spiritual formation 	<p>4. Will be able to explain the life of grace using these key concepts:</p> <p>Middle voice Remaining in Christ</p>

	Persons vs. Individuals Role of human response Legalism vs. training in grace Christian's relationship to the Law of God. Intention and commitment Spirit-filled life.
Assignments	
1. Read and write reflections on Adele Ahlberg Calhoun's "Introduction: Discovering Your Desires." 2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Meditate on Eph. 2:1-7 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.	

<i>Week 10: Understanding Spiritual disciplines</i>	
Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
A. Grace and Disciplines B. Definition of Spiritual Disciplines C. Aim of Spiritual Disciplines D. Practicing Spiritual Disciplines E. Necessity of Spiritual Disciplines	Students... 1. Will be able to articulate the relationship between grace and spiritual disciplines. 2. Will be able to define spiritual disciplines and demonstrate how spiritual disciplines contribute to spiritual growth. 3. Will be able to describe the role and the limitations of spiritual disciplines. 4. Will be able to defend the necessity of spiritual disciplines in the process of spiritual formation. 5. Will be able to explain the nature of spiritual disciplines using the following key concepts: Training "off the spot" "Making space" for God Making the supernatural natural Imitation of the entire life of Christ.
Assignments	
1. Read and write reflections on Adele Ahlberg Calhoun's "Rule for Life." 2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Meditate on Eph. 2:9-10; 4:1-5 this week, one verse a day. Record	

your meditation from last week on the CIS.

<i>Week 11: Survey of Disciplines</i>	
Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
A. Some classic/basic Disciplines 1) Bible Meditation 2) Solitude 3) Silence 4) Prayer 5) Community B. Other Disciplines 1) Disciplines of Abstinence 2) Disciplines of Engagements C. Forming the Rule of Life	Students... 1. Will have some basic understanding of classic disciplines and will be able to adopt them into their lives. 2. Will be introduced to wide ranges of spiritual disciplines. 3. Will further understand how spiritual disciplines function in their lives and will begin to make personalized list of disciplines for themselves. 4. Will understand the value of the rule of life and will be given examples and guidelines for developing their own rules of life.
Assignments	
1. Read and write reflections on: Dallas Willard and Don Simpson's "The Heart, Center of Our Life" and "The Battle for Our Thought Life." 2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Meditate on Ps. 23 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.	

<i>Week 12: Human System Overview and Understanding Human Mind</i>	
Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
A. Human System Overview B. Human Mind 1) Ideas 2) Images 3) Information 4) Thinking 5) Vision of loving God with our mind	Students... 1. Will be able to see the human system as a whole, and will recognize that true spiritual formation must impact the whole system. 2. Will be able to describe some connections between different parts of the human system.

	<p>3. Will be able to describe the human mind using the following terms:</p> <p>Ideas Images Information Thinking.</p> <p>4. Will have an understanding of how we can and must be transformed in mind.</p>
Assignments	
<p>1. Read and write reflections on Dallas Willard and Don Simpson's "Educating Our Feelings" and "The Body, Our Primary Ally."</p> <p>2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Meditate on Ps.19:1-7 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>	

<i>Week 13: Understanding Human Emotion and Body</i>	
Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
<p>A. Understanding Human Emotion</p> <p>1) Power of feelings 2) No direct mastery of our feelings 3) The vision for our feelings 4) Importance of feelings 5) Need to understand our feelings</p> <p>B. Understanding the Body</p> <p>1) How the body works 2) What is the body for? 3) Transformation of the body</p>	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will be able to appreciate the power, value and the proper role of human emotion.</p> <p>2. Will be able to identify the wrong ways of responding to emotions and learn how to approach the emotions in a right way.</p> <p>3. Will be able to appreciate the power, value and proper role of human body.</p> <p>4. Will be able identify the wrong ways of responding to the human body and learn how to approach their bodies in a right way.</p> <p>5. Will be able to explain the proper function of human emotions and their bodies using the following key concepts: Conditions underlying the emotions Listen, understand and leading the emotion</p>

	Body as a gift of God Automatic responses of the boy Training of the body.
Assignments	<p>1. Read and write reflections on Dallas Willard and Don Simpson's "Transforming Our Character" and "Changing How We Relate to Others."</p> <p>2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Meditate on Ps.19:8-14 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>

<i>Week 14: Understanding Human Will and Social Relationships</i>	
Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
A. Understanding Human Will 1)The design of the will 2) Mind and the will 3)The goal of the will 4)The problems with the will 5)The transformation of the will B. Understanding Social Relationship 1) Spiritual Formation is necessarily social 2) Reality of Sin in Relationships 3) Circle of Sufficiency	Students... 1. Will be able to explain the relationship between the will, mind and body. 2. Will recognize the proper place and the role of the human will. 3. Will be able to discern the problems that exist in the human will. 4. Will be able to articulate the process of transformation of the will. 5. Will be convinced that true spiritual formation is relational and must impact our social lives. 6. Will have a deeper insight into the evil that exists in our relationships. 7. Will begin to understand how God's grace impacts our relationships. 8. Will be able to explain the transformation of the will and social relationships using the following key concepts: Surrender, abandonment, contentment, and participation

	Will-less, Willful and willing Our free will and God's free will Meaning of true freedom Rejection assault and withdrawal 4 movements of love.
Assignments	
<p>1. <i>Personal Development Project Paper</i> DUE TODAY</p> <p>2. <i>Bible Meditation</i>. Meditate on Rom. 1:1-7 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>	

<i>Week 15: Conclusion, Summary and Questions and Answers.</i>	
Lesson Outline	Lesson Outcomes
A. Review the entire the process of Spiritual Formation. B. Answer any questions you have related to the course. C. Review for the final exam.	Students... 1. Will be given the "big picture" regarding the process of spiritual formation and will be able to give a brief explanation of that process. 2. Will be reminded of the key concepts related to the spiritual formation and will be able to see the connections between them. 3. Will have a good sense of how to prepare for the final exam.
Assignments	
<p>1. <i>Bible Meditation</i>. Meditate on Rom. 8-14 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>	

Assessment

Sample Final Exam

Figure 4.5. Sample Final Exam

Introduction to Christian Spiritual Formation FINAL EXAM

Name: _____

Student ID # _____

Choose 3 out of 5 questions from Section I AND choose 2 out of 4 questions from section II. Each question should be answered in 1-2 paragraphs .

You have from 8:00 to 9:30am (1 1/2 hours) to complete this exam. You may use Korean or English for this test.

Have fun!

Section I

Choose 3 from this section

1. What is the Christian vision of a spiritual formation? Explain using the following:
Godliness
Freedom and happiness
Loving God with all your heart... and loving your neighbors as you love yourself

2. Explain this definition of Spiritual Formation:
“A process of being formed into the likeness of Christ for the sake of God and others”

3. What is the essence of Sin, according to Genesis 3? What are some implications of this in human Character formation?

4. Explain the gospel using these words: atonement, regeneration, justification, and adoption.

Why is the gospel crucial for Spiritual Formation?

5. What do we mean by Spiritual Disciplines? How do they work?

Section II

Choose 2 from this section

6. What do we mean by Human Mind? Why is Human Mind critical for spiritual formation? What role does it play? How does it function in relation to other parts of the human system (feeling, willing, doing)? What is the aim of Christian spiritual formation with regards to the Mind?

7. What do we mean by Human Feeling? Why is Feeling critical for spiritual formation? What role does it play? How does it function in relation to other parts of the human system (thinking, willing, doing)? What is the aim of Christian spiritual formation with regards to Feeling?

8. What do we mean by Human Will? Why is the Human Will critical for the spiritual formation? What role does it play? How does it function in relation to other parts of human system (thinking, feeling, doing)? What is the aim of Christian spiritual formation with regards to the Human Will?

9. What do we mean by Human Body? Why is Human Body critical for the spiritual formation? What role does it play? How does it function in relation to other parts of human system (thinking, willing, feeling)? What is the aim of Christian spiritual formation with regards to the Human Body?

Grade Breakdown

Table 4.5. Grade Breakdown

Assignment/Exam	Due Dates	Points
Class Participation	Weekly	10
Weekly Reflections	Weekly	10
Reading and Reflection Papers on the Reading	Per assigned week	20
Journaling – Scripture Meditation	Weekly	15
Personal Development Project	Week 14	15
Final Exam	Week 16	30
Total Course Grade Point		100

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CHAPTER FIVE

EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE SPIRITUAL FORMATION

COURSE PROPOSAL

Introduction

This thesis has proposed a course on spiritual formation for undergraduate students in a Christian higher education institution. The aim of the present chapter is an evaluation of the effectiveness of such a proposal. Basic questions are: Should we implement this course? How can we improve the course design? How well will the course achieve its outcomes? Although, we cannot evaluate the actual course, it is possible to evaluate the course proposal in terms of its objectives and the possibility of achieving those objectives. The course design includes the learning tools, course topic/outline and assessments.

Six faculty members at Handong Global University were asked to evaluate the course. These reviewers represent a variety of departments: the Chaplains' office, the Department of Language Education, the School of Law, the School of Management and Economics, and the Global Leadership School. Each reviewer has had many years of experience in higher education, both in the classroom and in various levels of administrative leadership. To evaluate the course, each was given the course syllabus (appendix A), as well as a sample final examination (appendix B) to study along with the following evaluation form to fill out:

Figure 5.1. Course Design Evaluation

<u>Evaluation</u>		
Components	Score	Comments
I. Course Description	1 2 3 4 5	
II. Course Objectives	1 2 3 4 5	
III. Learning Tools	1 2 3 4 5	
A. Lecture Design	1 2 3 4 5	
B. Required Reading	1 2 3 4 5	
C. Bible Meditation	1 2 3 4 5	
D. Personal Development Project	1 2 3 4 5	
E. Rule of Life	1 2 3 4 5	
IV. Course Outline	1 2 3 4 5	
A. Topic and Outline	1 2 3 4 5	
B. Lesson Outcomes	1 2 3 4 5	
C. Assignments	1 2 3 4 5	
V. Assessment	1 2 3 4 5	
A. Grade Breakdown	1 2 3 4 5	

	B. Sample Final Exam	1 2 3 4 5	
	VI. Bibliography	1 2 3 4 5	
	Overall	1 2 3 4 5	

The following sections of this chapter evaluate the reviewers' feedback. The examination of these comments is reflected in the improvements made in the course syllabus. The chapter closes with suggestions for future research and for a follow-up course in spiritual formation.

Course Evaluation Results

Table 5.1. Course Evaluation Results

Category	Score (1-5)					Comments from the faculty (Faculty A-F)
I. Course Description	4	4	5	5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> More detailed descriptions (B) "But it would be perfect if you specify the type of prospective students, that is, for whom this course has been designed.... It also needs to explain how this course is related with the vision/mission of HGU or the educational goal of a Christian university." (F)
II. Course Objectives	5	5	5	?	5	"Description of each outcome is effective" (D)
III. Learning Tools	5	5	5	5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "This course would help students a lot to develop a good habit for their spiritual growth. It could produce a synergy effect for the spiritual formation of students through various tools including weekly reflection, reading and reflection, journaling, personal development, and interview." (F) Clarify the contribution of each learning tool to respective learning outcomes (B)
A. Lecture Design	4	5	4	5	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Small group discussion after personal reflection. (A) Number of pages should be in the syllabus (B)
B. Required Reading	5	?	5	?	5	
C. Bible Meditation	5	5	5	3	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bible Meditations are too long, 10-15 min to be realistic. (E)
D. Personal Development Project	5	5	5	?	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Life Line Graph –Why use the percentage? (E) The length and the format for the Reflection paper should be specified (E)
E. Rule of Life	5	5	5	5	5	"Great assignment for developing a plan for continued development and growth in spiritual discipline." (C)
IV. Course Outline	5	5	5	5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> "The learning tools and course outline are excellent. I have no reservation in this regard." (F) "Well Organized and thorough." (D)
A. Topic and Outline	5	5	5	5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lectures have phenomenal content. However, I think the content is too rich. You would obviously find yourself not completing the content or covering it in too shallow of a manner. I actually think you have covered Spiritual Formation so thoroughly it could be turned into Spiritual Formation I & II which many schools have done." (C) History of spiritual formation can be covered (B)

B. Lesson Outcomes	5	5	5	5	5	
C. Assignments	5	5	5	?	5	
V. Assessment	5	5	5	5	5	"It seems to be well-balanced in that the 50% weight has been assigned to final, reading and reflection as the remaining 50% to training-related areas.... With respect to assessment, it would be good if students could get an idea how you will grade their assignments. Grading criteria need to be provided for each of those different types of assignment. It would be worthwhile to develop some rubric for the evaluation of student assignment." (F) "Well thought out." (D)
A. Grade Breakdown	5	5	5	5	4	• Faculty E suggested an alternate grade breakdown, giving more weight to the final exam and less to the Bible meditation.
B. Sample Final Exam	5	5	5	5	3	• Too much portion given to human system (E)
VI. Bibliography	5	?	5	?	5	• Supplementary readings should be given for those who want to explore this topic further. (A)
Overall	5	5	5	5	5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concern that the workload for this course exceeds that of a 2 credit course (B and C) "I think this seems like a well-rounded plan which will be effective in helping students to develop good spiritual habits for their future." (A) "...this course offers more practical and attainable goals. I am sure the course will help transforming the students. I would like to take this course. (B) "Very thorough course. (C) "I was impressed very much with your idea about this new course. It could be a fine course for learning as well as for training." (F) "This course would help students a lot to develop a good habit for their spiritual growth. (F) "Again, it must be an excellent course. I hope many students will experience radical change in their journey of life by taking this course: true spiritual enlightenment." (F) "An excellent proposal; It strikes at the heart of what is needed at Handong—personal commitment rooted in love and attentive to what God desires: our hearts fully in love with Him." (D)

Overall Result

Feedback from the reviewers was very positive. Each gave the maximum score of 5 in the “Overall” sections, and their comments across the board were positive:¹ the proposed course was assessed as well-rounded, practical, thorough, and transforming. The course outline, including the lecture topics, and the lesson outcomes all received

¹ One faculty member did not give numeric scores, but offered helpful comments on various aspect of the course proposal.

perfect scores. Comments for the content of the course included the adjectives “phenomenal,” “well-organized,” and “thorough.” The learning tools and the assessment also received perfect scores and favorable comments. Most significant of the responses was that most comments in the “Overall” section focused on the impact the course would have on the lives of the students.

The answer to the question whether we should implement the course was a solid “yes.” Considering the positive feedback regarding course objectives, learning tools, and outline and assessment, it is also safe to say that not only are the course objectives appropriate, but the course will achieve the objectives that it seeks.

Comments and Suggestions²

Course Objectives and the Learning Tools

Reviewers also suggested that it would be helpful to see which learning tools contribute to which course objectives. They felt that seeing such connections would help students to be motivated to participate in the learning process. The following information will be included in the assessment section of the course syllabus:

Table 5.2. Corresponding Course Learning Tools for the Course Objectives

Course Objectives	Course Learning Tools
1. Students will be able to clearly articulate the vision of Christian Spiritual Formation.	1. Lectures 3 and 2, 8, 9, 12-15 2. Reading associated with the lectures 3. Personal Development Project
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge	1. Lectures 4-9

² Most, but not all, of the reviewers’ comments have been responded to in this section.

regarding the basic theological framework undergirding Christian Spiritual Formation.	2. Readings associated with the lectures
3. Students will understand the overall process of spiritual formation and be able to identify key factors that contribute to its process.	1. All of the lectures, especially 8-9 2. Readings associated with the lectures 3. Bible Meditation 4. Personal Development Project 5. Rule of Life
4. Students will have a greater understanding of the proper function and the value of spiritual disciplines and will begin to make appropriate use of them in their individual personal development.	1. Lectures 2, 10 and 11 2. Readings associated with the lectures 3. Personal Development Project 4. Rule of Life
5. Students will develop an increased sense of personal identity and calling, and will have a greater awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.	1. Lectures 4-6, 8, and 11 2. Readings associated with the lectures 3. Bible Meditations 4. Personal Development Project 5. Rule of Life

The lectures and the reading assignments associated with the lecture topics are seen here to address the course objectives. Actually the lecture topics and the reading assignments were specifically designed from the start to achieve the learning outcomes. Other learning tools contribute indirectly or directly to achieve the course objectives depending on the nature of the objectives.

Prospective Students

Another helpful comment involved clarifying the target audience of the course. Although the course description, learning outcomes and the course outline should give a clear understanding of the nature of this course to the prospective students, it can be helpful to include a statement specifying the target audience in the description. The following paragraph will be added to the course description:

This course is an elective course designed for those who seek to understand and to experience a lifestyle of spiritual growth where the relationship with God deepens as the students learn to become more like him from the heart. This course will also help those who seek to have a deeper understanding of the problem, the purpose and the nature of human existence. The course will not only explore who we are, why we exist, and what is wrong with us, but it will also show us how we can begin to be transformed to be authentic and free.

The course is designed to benefit all students, and therefore targets all students. The first sentence is intended to appeal to those Christians who desire a deeper relationship with God and the latter portion of the paragraph is designed to engage both non-Christians and nominal Christians.

The Mission of HGU

It was also commented that it would be helpful to include the mission statement of the university in the syllabus. Not only does the mission of the university and its purpose of Christian higher learning need to be reinforced, but also students need to see how this particular course can contribute to their achieving the mission of our university.

Table 5.3. Mission Statements of HGU and the Center for Christian Foundations

I. Mission
HGU
Handong Global University will be the "World Changing Global Christian University" educating twenty-first century leaders for Korea and the world who embody excellence in both academics and Christian moral character, in particular, honesty and integrity. ³
Center for Christian Foundations

³ Handong Global University, "About HGU: Vision Statement," Handong Global University, <http://www.handong.edu/index.html> (accessed March 27, 2012).

The Mission of the Center for Christian Foundations is to provide a basic knowledge related to Christian faith and worldview necessary for educating leaders who embody excellence in both academics and Christian moral character as stated in the vision of HGU.⁴

Recommended Reading

Another suggestion was to include a recommended reading list in addition to the course readings for those who are interested in pursuing further study in the area of spiritual formation. The following will be added to the course syllabus:

Table 5.4. Recommended Reading

Recommended Reading
Bridges, Jerry. <i>The Practice of Godliness</i> . Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1983.
Crabb, Larry. <i>Inside Out</i> . Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1988.
Edwards, Jonathan. <i>Religious Affections: How Man's Will Affects His Character Before God</i> . Edited by James Houston. Portland, Oregon: Multnomah Press, 1984.
Foster, Richard J. <i>Celebration of Discipline: The Pathway to Spiritual Growth</i> . New York: HarperCollins, 1978.
Houston, James M. <i>The Mentored Life: From Individualism to Personhood</i> . Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 2002.
Lawrenz, Mel. <i>The Dynamics of Spiritual Formation</i> . Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker Books, 2000.
Lane, Timothy S., and Paul David Tripp. <i>How People Change</i> . Greensboro: New Growth Press, 2006.
McGrath, Alister E. <i>Christian Spirituality: An Introduction</i> . Blackwell, 1999.

⁴ Chaplain's Office of the HGU, *A Guide to Faith Education of HGU* (Pohang: HGU, 2011), 34.

- Mulholland, M. Robert. *Invitation to a Journey: A Road Map for Spiritual Formation*. Downers Grove, IL: Intervarsity, 1993.
- Nouwen, Henri J.M. *Reaching Out: The Spiritual Movements of the Spiritual Life*. New York: Doubleday, 1975.
- _____. *The Way of the Heart: Desert Spirituality and Contemporary Ministry*. New York: HarperCollins Publishing, 1981.
- _____. *In the Name of Jesus: Reflections on Christian Leadership*. New York: Crossroad, 1989.
- Packer, J.I. *Rediscovering Holiness*. Ann Arbor, Michigan: Vine Books, 1992.
- Petersen, Jim. *Lifestyle Discipleship: The Challenge of Following Jesus in Today's World*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1993.
- Peterson, Eugene H. *Working the Angle: The Shape of Pastoral Integrity*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1987.
- _____. *The Contemplative Pastor: Returning to the Art of Spiritual Direction*. Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1989.
- Piper, John. *Desiring God: Meditations of a Christian Hedonist*. Sisters, Oregon: Multnomah Books, 1986.
- White, John. *The Fight: A Practical Handbook for Christian Living*. Downers Grove, IL. : Intervarsity, 1976.
- _____. *The Pathway of Holiness: A Guide for Sinners*. Downers Grove, IL. : Intervarsity, 1996.
- Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishing, 1998.

Reading Assignments

There was a concern expressed with regards to the amount of reading assigned each week. It was suggested that the number of pages to be read be printed in the syllabus

and a “reasonable” reading load be assigned for the course. The number of pages in each assigned reading will be printed in the updated syllabus in both the required reading section and in the course outline.⁵

After calculating the total pages of reading for the course, it is determined that the current required reading is reasonable. The 250 pages total is required for the course, and on average, 19 pages are required per week for 13 weeks.

Personal Development Project

There was also a concern raised regarding the Personal Development Project. While all the evaluators thought that this project would contribute positively to the effectiveness of the overall course, a concern was raised with regards to the intimate aspect of this Project. The willingness of each student to fully participate in the Project could be in question since it involves sharing in the “Personal History Survey” and having personal interviews with the instructor. The issue becomes more highlighted when the gender of the student is considered.

A few options are possible in dealing with this concern. One, the Project can be optional and extra credit can be given for it. The advantage for this option is that only those who are enthusiastic will participate in the project and its effectiveness in their lives will be enhanced because of their willingness to participate. The disadvantage of this option is that a key component of the learning tools will be made optional, thus impacting the effectiveness of the course. Another option is to have several “spiritual directors” so that the students can choose their own director, thus addressing the gender issue as well.

⁵ See Appendix C for the updated Course Syllabus.

The difficulty there involves finding qualified spiritual directors who are able to discern students' needs and meet them with appropriate spiritual disciplines. The last option is to proceed with the current proposal and evaluate the Project after it has been taught for the first time. Given that the Project is expected to contribute positively to the course, there is a possibility that the students will not find it problematic. It may be prudent, then, to progress with the course as planned and evaluate it afterward. Considering all the various options, the Project proposal will proceed as planned and a careful evaluation will be conducted after the course has first been taught.

Future Research and Suggestions

Future Research

Re-evaluation of the course after it has been taught for the first time is clearly recommended. The success of the course objectives can be better assessed after studying the answers on the final exam, the required reading and lecture reflections, as well as the Personal Development Project papers and the rule of life that each student has produced. A thoughtful survey and exit interview can also give further insights into the success of the course in achieving its objectives. Such surveys and interviews can assess not only the overall success of the course but the specific contribution of each component to the course.

It will also be interesting to see the effectiveness of the course in the lives of the students who took the course. How do non-Christians respond to the course as compared

to Christians? A survey can be given at the beginning of the course to have information regarding the students' faith commitment, personal background and the interest in the subject of the course and compare this with an exit survey. Insight gained from such surveys will help increase the effectiveness of the course for all students.

Suggestions

Other topics related to spiritual formation were considered for the course but were not included at the end due to the time limitation of the course. Course evaluators also pointed out that the content of the course was too "rich" and were concerned that there was too much content for a 2 credit course. While the course needs to be taught first and properly evaluated to see if all the content can indeed be covered adequately as planned, this was a valid observation and a logical concern.

A follow up course, Spiritual Formation II, can surely be appropriate for those who desire to learn more in this area. Spiritual Formation II would cover topics that were not covered in the first course: the history of Christian spirituality and a survey of spiritual traditions, for instance. Such topics would introduce the students to different spiritual approaches. Another area of consideration is Biblical exegesis of relevant texts that deal with spiritual formation. Along with the Biblical expositions, differing doctrines of sanctification can then be explored.

Spiritual Formation II would, then, build on the first course by exploring a variety of spiritual disciplines, especially spiritual friendship, and spiritual direction and involve small group exercises that had not been a part of the first course. As it is, if the

material in the current spiritual formation course is “too rich,” it can be included in the second course.

Conclusions

An earnest attempt was made in this thesis to explore and to understand the process of spiritual formation. Many authors were consulted, and it was possible to gain an understanding of the nature of spiritual formation and to discern some critical factors that contribute to spiritual formation. These have resulted in this proposal for an academic course on spiritual formation to be taught at a Christian university.

The proposal was evaluated by several faculty members at Handong Global University and their feedback was all positive. The course, according to their evaluation, should be implemented and it will likely achieve its objectives. The evaluations have led to additions to the course design.

In the Spring of 2012, the course will be formally proposed to the Center for the Christian Foundation to be taught in the Fall of 2012.

APPENDIX 1

COURSE SYLLABUS

Introduction to Christian Spiritual Formation **Fall Semester 2012**

Instructor: Pastor Young Ho Hwang

Office: Nehemiah Hall 425

Tel: 054-260-1225

Class Time: Wednesdays, 1:20pm to 3:00pm

Email: pastoryh@handong.edu

HP: 010-5583-1560

I. Course Description

In this course, we will investigate the nature and the process of spiritual formation from Biblical, theological, personal, social, and practical perspectives. The aim of the course is not only to convey information but to engage us so that we can live lives holy and free with God.

This is a short two credit course that is attempting to deal with the topic of formation of the human soul. This course will serve to pique interest, point the way, and introduce a life-long process of “becoming more like our Lord Jesus.”

The course is taught with conviction from Christian experience. The Bible is the text that will give us a firm basis for understanding and experiencing the kind of spiritual formation that God has called us to embrace.

II. Course Objectives

1. Students will be able to clearly articulate the vision of Christian Spiritual Formation.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge regarding the basic theological framework undergirding Christian Spiritual Formation.
3. Students will understand the overall process of spiritual formation and be able to identify key factors that contribute to its process.
4. Students will have a greater understanding of the proper function and the value of spiritual disciplines and will begin to make appropriate use of them in their individual personal development.
5. Students will develop an increased sense of personal identity and calling, and will have

a greater awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.

III. Learning Tools

1. Lectures.

- There will be 80 minutes of lecture each week covering the topics listed in the course outline.
- Each lecture will end with a time of *personal reflection* during which students can process, organize and write down information concerning insights and personal applications.

Name:

Student ID:

Date:

1. Summary and the flow of today's lecture:

2. Key concepts that I need to understand and to remember:

3. Some ideas that I need to further process:

4. Personal applications:

5. Questions:

2. Required Reading

- The following chapters can be found in the CIS under "Resources."

Read By	Assigned Reading
Week 2 9/12	David E. Ross, "A Simple Method for Biblical Meditation" and "The Meaning of Meditation" in <i>A Table Before Me: A Meditating Christian</i> (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2007).
Week 3 9/19	Dallas Willard and Don Simpson, "A Revolution Has Begun" in <i>Revolution of Character: Discovering Christ's Pattern for Spiritual Transformation</i> (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2008).

Week 4 9/26	Scott Hafemann, "Why Do We Exist?" in <i>The God of Promise and the Life of Faith: Understanding the Heart of the Bible</i> . (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001).
Week 5 10/3	J.C. Ryle, "Sin" in <i>Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots</i> . (Durham, England: Evangelical Press, 1979).
Week 6 10/10	Clifford Williams, "Motives Undermining the Singleness of Heart" in <i>Singleness of Heart: Restoring the Divided Soul</i> . (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1994).
Week 7 10/17	Jerry Bridges, "Preach the Gospel to Yourself" in <i>The Disciplines of Grace: God's Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness</i> . (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1994).
Week 8 10/25	Neil T. Anderson and Robert L. Saucy, "Our new freedom in Christ" in <i>God's Power at Work In You</i> . (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 2001).
Week 9 10/31	Gordon D. Fee, "Conversion: Getting In (Part 2), The Spirit as the Entry Point" in <i>Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God</i> . (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996).
Week 10 11/7	Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, "Introduction: Discovering Your Desires" in <i>Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us</i> . (Downers Groves: IL, IVP Press, 2005).
Week 11 11/14	Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, "Rule for Life"
Week 12 11/21	Dallas Willard and Don Simpson, "The Heart, Center of Our Life" and "The Battle for Our Thought Life"
Week 13 11/28	Dallas Willard and Don Simpson, "Educating Our Feelings" and "The Body, Our Primary Ally"
Week 14 12/5	Dallas Willard and Don Simpson, "Transforming Our Character" and "Changing How We Relate to Others"

- Students are expected to write a short *reflection from the reading* based on the following the format.

Name: Student ID: Date:
1. Brief summary/outline of the chapter:
2. Highlights: What are some ideas that stood out to you? Why?

3. Personal application: How does the reading relate to you personally?
4. What are some questions or comments that you have from the reading?

3. Bible Meditation

Daily Bible meditation will be assigned as an integral part of the course. Each day read the selected passages from the Bible and spend 15-30 minutes each day reflecting, praying, and journaling in response.

Reading assignment and other instructions regarding Bible meditation will help you to benefit from this exercise.

Submit (every Monday by noon on CIS board) your meditation assignment from the previous week. Example:

Week 1

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Yes or No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Time	9:30pm til 9:45pm	7am to 7:30am		7am to 7:30am	7am to 7:30am		1pm to 2pm
Place	My Room	Prayer walk around the school		Chapel	Chapel		Downtown Starbucks
Comment		I realized that God is truly great		I just went through the motion			It was a really good time

4. Personal Development Project

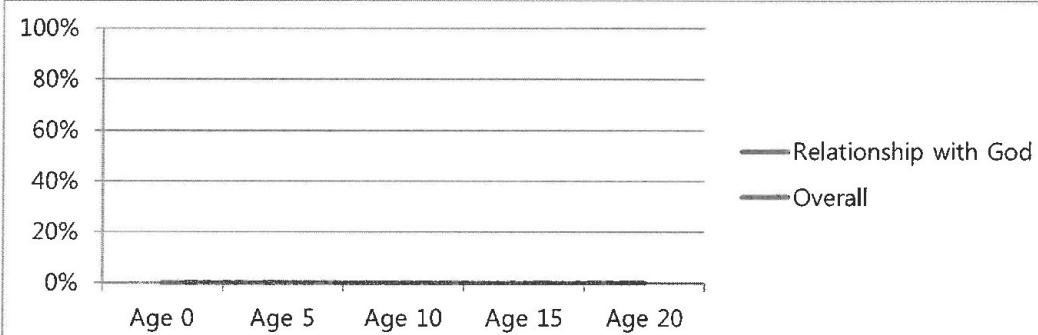
a) Personal History Survey

Students are to write a brief personal history at the beginning of this project. The survey will ask questions related to family background, influential people, significant events, their relationship with God and an area of their lives that they would like to change. As a part of this survey, students are also asked to fill out the “Lifeline Graph,” where they are to indicate the high and low points of their lives.

Name:
Student ID:
Date:

1. What was your childhood like? Please describe your family and your relationship with your family members.

2. Who influenced you the most? In what way?
3. How would you describe your relationship with God?
4. What questions do you have regarding the topic of spiritual formation / personal change?
5. What area of your life do you want to see change/growth in?
6. Life Graph: Please mark the high and low points of your life and your relationship with God. Make notice of the turning points.



b) Personal Interview with Pastor Young Ho

I will meet with each student to go over the personal historical survey. During the interview, I want to dialogue with you regarding the area of change that you would like to experience in your life.

An appropriate spiritual discipline will be assigned specifically to help you. You will need to keep a journal of your spiritual discipline and record its progress throughout the semester. There will be a brief “check-up” in the middle of the semester and a final exit interview.

c) Reflection Paper

- At the end of the course, you will submit a reflection paper regarding your own personal development project.
- The format is as follows:

Name:

Student ID:

Date:

What was the most significant thing you gained through this project?

How would you rate your effort and commitment to the project? (Out of 10; 10 being the best.)

Do you think the spiritual discipline(s) that was suggested to you was appropriate? What did you find difficult about this discipline? What did you find rewarding about it?

What questions or comments do you have regarding your personal growth related to this project and how will you live differently in the future?

5. Developing a Personal Rule of Life

During this course, you will have developed rule of life which is “a pattern of spiritual disciplines that provides structure and direction for growth in holiness.” The aim of the course is not only to communicate information about spiritual formation and the factors that contributes to its growth, but also to help put into practice what you have learned and to instill in you a new way of living responsively to God.

You will be given a chapter to read from Calhoun’s book, *Spiritual Formation Handbook*, which will give practical examples and guidance on how to develop your own rule of life. Various lectures and readings during the course will contribute to your writing your own rule of life.

Sample Rule of Life

Pope John XXIII

Fifteen minutes of silent prayer upon rising in the morning.

Fifteen minutes of spiritual reading.

Before bed, a general examination of conscience followed by confession; then identifying issues for the next morning's prayer.

Dorothy Day

Receive Communion Daily.

Read the Bible daily.

Keep a journal daily.

See Christ in the face of the poor.

Catherine de Hueck Doherty (Founder of Madonna House in Ontario, Canada)

Monthly retreat into silence and solitude for a twenty-four-hour period.

John the HGU Student

Spend 30 minutes each day after lunch in a prayer walk with God.
Once a week, talk with one person I do not know well with no other intention than to bless, to pray (inside) and to serve.
Fast one meal every Monday and secretly give the money to someone in need.

Some questions and comments to guide the writing of the rule of life

1. What are your preferred spiritual disciplines? Why do you prefer them? How helpful are these disciplines for your spiritual growth?
2. What spiritual disciplines do you shrink from? Why?
Do you think some of the disciplines that you shrink from will nonetheless help you to grow spiritually? Which ones? Why do you think so?
3. Take some time to pray to the Lord regarding your lifestyle and ask the Lord to guide you in developing a rule of life.
4. Make a list of spiritual disciplines that you feel will benefit your relationship with God the most. See to it that your list is balanced between the ones that you prefer and the ones that you shrink from.
5. Please be realistic. A rule of life is not about living an ideal life but about living an actual, transforming life. You can add/modify your rule of life as you grow. You can start with the first 1 or 2 items in your list and go from there.

IV. Course Outline

Wk	Date	Topic and Outline	Lesson Outcomes	Assignments
1	9/5	Introduction to the course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Course Description B. Learning Outcomes C. Learning tools D. Course Outline E. Assessment and class requirements F. Assignment for next week G. Q&A 	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will become more familiarized with each other and with the instructor.</p> <p>2. Will have a clear understanding of this course with respect to: The course description The course outcome The course learning tools The course outline The course assessment tools The assignment for next week.</p> <p>3. Will be excited about what they will learn and experience in this course and will be motivated to invest in the learning process required by this course.</p> <p>4. Will begin to think thoughts related to spiritual formation and raise personal issues and questions about their own spiritual formation.</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: David E. Ross' "A Simple Method for Biblical Meditation." and "The Meaning of Meditation."</p> <p>2. Complete <i>Personal History Survey</i> (2 weeks for this assignment)</p>
2	9/12	Definitions of Spiritual Formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. What is "Character?" B. Definition of Spiritual Formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Process 2) Of being conformed 3) Into the image of Christ 4) For the sake of God and for others C. Teachings on Bible Meditation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is Bible Meditation? 2) Why should we meditate on God's Word? 3) How do we meditate? 	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will have a clear understanding of what human character is.</p> <p>2. Will reflect on the character that they possess now. Will discern what they have become rather than believe in what they imagine themselves to be.</p> <p>3. Will begin to understand the nature of spiritual formation. They will have: proper goal of spiritual formation proper appreciation of the nature of process proper perspective of our role in the process.</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: Dallas Willard and Don Simpson's "A Revolution Has Begun."</p> <p>2. Sign up for a <i>Personal Interview</i> with Pastor Young Ho for your <i>Personal Development Project</i>.</p> <p>3. <i>Bible Meditation</i>. Meditate on Ps.1 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
3	9/19	Vision for Spiritual Formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Godliness and Holiness B. The greatest commandment C. Freedom and Happiness D. Solitude – Community-Ministry E. "Gracious relationship of intimacy, dependence, and Lordship of God that results in freedom and holiness" II. Comments 	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will have clear understanding of the appropriate vision for spiritual formation</p> <p>2. Will recognize and reject wrong/inadequate visions for spiritual formation.</p> <p>3. Will be able to understand and explain these key concepts: Godliness Holiness Freedom Happiness</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: Scott Hafemann's "Why Do We Exist?"</p> <p>2. Sign up for <i>Personal Interview</i> with Pastor Young Ho for <i>Personal Development Project</i>.</p> <p>3. <i>Personal History Survey</i> is DUE TODAY.</p>

		<p>A. The vision has to come from God.</p> <p>B. Spiritual formation has to do with the heart.</p> <p>C. Spiritual formation must shape the whole person.</p> <p>D. The vision is for the characteristic, lasting change.</p> <p>E. The vision is relational at the core.</p>	<p>Heart – whole person – inner change</p> <p>Characteristic</p> <p>Intimacy</p> <p>Dependence</p> <p>Lordship</p> <p>Relationship God.</p>	<p>4. Bible Meditation. Please meditate on Ps. 139: 1-7 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
Wk	Date	Topic and Outline	Lesson Outcomes	Assignments
4	9/26	<p>Theological Foundations for Spiritual Formation 1: Creation</p> <p>A. Supremacy of God</p> <p>B. Place of Humanity</p> <p>C. Doctrine of Creation Provides a Basis for Understanding Humanity</p> <p>D. Implications for Spiritual Formation</p>	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will begin to have a God-centered orientation towards all of life, including their self-understanding.</p> <p>2. Will have a clear understanding of the place, dignity and the purpose of human life.</p> <p>3. Will appreciate the value of the doctrine of creation as a basis for understanding of whole of human life.</p> <p>4. Students will be able to understand and explain these key concepts: Absolute greatness and goodness of God The glory of Humanity Image of God Kingdom of God.</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: J.C. Ryle's "Sin."</p> <p>2.Bible Meditation. Please meditate on Ps. 139:8-14 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
5	10/3	<p>Theological Foundation for Spiritual Formation 2: The Fall</p> <p>A. The Shape of Sin 1) Did God really Say? 2) You will not surely Die. 3) God is not to be trusted as God</p> <p>B. The Results of Sin 1) Eyes Opened 2) Shame 3) Judgment</p> <p>C. The Nature of Sin 1) Definition of Sin 2) The Source of Sin 3) The Extent of Sin 4) Offensiveness of Sin 5) The Dilemma of Sin 6) The Deceit of Sin</p>	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will be able to articulate the heart of all Sin and how this leads to all kinds of expressions of sins.</p> <p>2. Will be able to identify how temptation works and will begin to develop a strategy to resist it.</p> <p>3. Will better understand their own sinful condition and will begin to appreciate the help that God provides.</p> <p>4. Will be able to explain the following key concepts: Independence as the heart of sin Temptation comes through deception We sin because we are sinners Shattered image of God Total depravity The sin beneath all sins.</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: Clifford Williams' "Motives Undermining the Singleness of Heart."</p> <p>2.Bible Meditation. Please meditate on Ps. 139:14-21 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
6	10/10	Further Exploration into Human Sinful Condition	Students...	1. Read and write reflections on:

		<p>A. Our Thirst</p> <p>B. Our Dividedness</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ambivalence 2) Illusion 3) Resistance 4) Indifference 5) Compulsive <p>C. Underlying Barriers</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Desire for reward 2) Fear of disapproval 3) Self-justification 4) Comparison 5) Self-congratulation 6) Impulse to live outside ourselves 7) Imagination 8) Busyness 	<p>1. Will be able to appreciate the complex and diverse manifestation of human sinfulness</p> <p>2. Will have insights into the sinful and divided condition of the human heart.</p> <p>3. Will be able to identify and recognize the “underlying barriers” in their own lives.</p> <p>4. Will be able to explain these key concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Idolatry Compulsive existence Basic need for significance, security and satisfaction Singleness of the heart. 	<p>Jerry Bridges’ “Preach the Gospel to Yourself.”</p> <p><i>2.Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Ps. 139:22-24 and John 15:1-4 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
Wk	Date	Topic and Outline	Lesson Outcomes	Assignments
7	10/17	<p>Theological Foundations for Spiritual Formation 3: Salvation in Christ</p> <p>A. Atonement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Sacrifice 2) Propitiation 3) Reconciliation 4) Redemption <p>B. Regeneration</p> <p>C. Justification</p> <p>D. Adoption</p>	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will be able understand and articulate the Christian gospel message.</p> <p>2. Will be able to explain these terms and be able to explain their significance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Atonement Sacrifice Propitiation Reconciliation Redemption Regeneration Justification Adoption. <p>3. Will be moved in their hearts by hearing the message of the cross of Jesus.</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: Neil T. Anderson and Robert L. Saucy’s “Our new freedom in Christ.”</p> <p><i>2.Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on John 15:5-11 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
8	10/24	<p>Living out salvation in Christ: The Normal Christian Life 1.</p> <p>A. Vocation: Understanding the three callings upon your life</p> <p>B. A gracious relationship with God characterized by intimacy, dependence, and Lordship that results in freedom and holiness.</p> <p>Relationship Of Intimacy Dependence Lordship of God That results in Freedom And Holiness</p>	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will be clear about their basic calling in life.</p> <p>2. Will have a Biblical perspective on work, rest and worship.</p> <p>3. Will be able to explain the normal Christian life using the following key concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gracious Relationship Intimacy Dependence Lordship Results. Freedom Holiness 	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: Gordon D. Fee’s “Conversion: Getting In (Part 2): The Spirit as the Entry Point.”</p> <p><i>2.Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on John 15:12-18 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
9	10/31	The Normal Christian Life 2: Life of Grace	Students...	1. Read and write reflections on:

		<p>A. Salvation in Three Tenses</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Past 2) Present 3) Future <p>B. Life of Grace</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Meaning of grace 2) Knowing the grace that is ours 3) How to remain in the grace 4) God's role and our role 5) John 15 <p>C. Life in the Spirit</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The Person of the Holy Spirit 2) His role in salvation: past, present, and future 3) His role in our spiritual formation 	<p>1. Will know what they already have in Christ and begin to understand the implications of their identity in Christ.</p> <p>2. Will have an understanding of the future grace for the people of God and begin to shape their current outlook towards life.</p> <p>3. Will be able to articulate the meaning and power of God's grace.</p> <p>4. Will be able to explain the life of grace using these key concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Middle voice Remaining in Christ Persons vs. Individuals Role of human response Legalism vs. training in grace Christian's relationship to the law of God. Intention and commitment Spirit-filled life 	<p>Adele Ahlberg Calhoun's "Introduction: Discovering Your Desires."</p> <p><i>2. Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Eph. 2:1-7 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
Wk	Date	Topic and Outline	Lesson Outcomes	Assignments
10	11/7	<p>Understanding Spiritual Disciplines</p> <p>A. Grace and the Disciplines</p> <p>B. Definition of Spiritual Disciplines</p> <p>C. Aim of Spiritual Disciplines</p> <p>D. Practicing Spiritual Disciplines</p> <p>E. Necessity of Spiritual Disciplines</p>	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will be able to articulate the relationship between grace and the spiritual disciplines.</p> <p>2. Will be able to define the spiritual disciplines and to demonstrate how they function to contribute to spiritual growth.</p> <p>3. Will be able to describe the role and the limitations of the spiritual disciplines.</p> <p>4. Will be able to defend the necessity of the spiritual disciplines in the process of spiritual formation.</p> <p>5. Will be able to explain the nature of the spiritual disciplines using the following key concepts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> "Training "off the spot" "Making space" for God Making the supernatural natural Imitation of the entire life of Christ 	<p>1. Read and write reflections on Adele Ahlberg Calhoun's "Rule for Life."</p> <p><i>2. Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Eph. 2:9-10; 4:1-5 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
11	11/14	<p>Survey of Disciplines</p> <p>A. Some classic/basic Disciplines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Bible Meditation 2) Solitude 3) Silence 4) Prayer 5) Community <p>B. Other Disciplines</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Disciplines of Abstinence 2) Disciplines of Engagements <p>C. Forming the Rule of Life</p>	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will have some basic understanding of classic disciplines and will be able to adopt them into their lives.</p> <p>2. Will be introduced to a wide range of spiritual disciplines.</p> <p>3. Will further understand how spiritual disciplines function in their lives and will begin to make personalized list of disciplines for themselves.</p> <p>4. Will understand the value of the rule of life and will be given examples and</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on Dallas Willard and Don Simpson's "The Heart, Center of Our Life." and "The Battle for Our Thought Life."</p> <p><i>2. Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Ps. 23 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>

			guidelines for developing their own rules of life.	
Wk	Date	Topic and Outline	Lesson Outcomes	Assignments
12	11/21	Human System Overview and Understanding the Human Mind A. Human System Overview B. Human Mind <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ideas 2) Images 3) Information 4) Thinking 5) Vision of loving God with our mind 	Students... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will be able to see the human system as a whole and will recognize that true spiritual formation must impact the whole system. 2. Will be able to describe some connections between different parts of the human system. 3. Will be able to describe the human mind using the following terms: Ideas Images Information Thinking 4. Will have an understanding of how we can and must be transformed with regards to our mind. 	1. Read and write reflections on: Dallas Willard and Don Simpson's "Educating Our Feelings." and "The Body, Our Primary Ally." 2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Ps.19:1-7 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.
13	11/28	Understanding Human Emotion and Body A. Understanding Human Emotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Power of Feelings 2) No direct mastery of our feelings 3) The vision for our feelings 4) Importance of feelings 5) Need to understand our feelings B. Understanding the Body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How the body works 2) What is the body for? 3) Transformation of the body 	Students... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will be able to appreciate the power, value and proper role of human emotion. 2. Will be able identify the wrong ways of responding to emotions and know how to approach emotions in a right way. 3. Will be able to appreciate the power, value and the proper role of the human body. 4. Will be able identify the wrong ways of responding to human body and know how to approach the body in a right way. 5. Will be able to explain the proper function of human emotion and body using the following key concepts: Conditions underlying the emotions Listen, understand and lead emotions Body as a gift of God Automatic responses of the body Training of the body 	1. Read and write reflections on: Dallas Willard and Don Simpson's "Transforming Our Character" and "Changing How We Relate to Others." 2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Ps.19:8-14 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.
14	12/5	Understanding Human Will and Social Relationships A. Understanding Human Will <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) The design of the will 2) Mind and the will 	Students... <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Will be able to explain the relationship between the will, mind and body. 2. Will recognize the proper place and the role of the human will. 	1. <i>Personal Development Project Paper</i> is DUE TODAY.

		<p>3)The goal of the will 4)The problems with the will 5)The transformation of the will</p> <p>B. Understanding Social Relationship</p> <p>1) Spiritual Formation is necessarily social 2) Reality of Sin in Relationships 3) Circle of Sufficiency</p>	<p>3. Will be able to discern the problems that exist in human will.</p> <p>4. Will be able to articulate the process of transformation of the will</p> <p>5. Will be convinced that true spiritual formation is relational and must impact our social network.</p> <p>6. Will have a deeper insight into the evil that exists in our relationships.</p> <p>7. Will begin to understand how God's grace impacts our relationships.</p> <p>8. Will be able to explain the transformation of the will and social relationships using the following key concepts: Surrender, abandonment, contentment, and participation Will-less, Willful and willing Our free will and God's free will Meaning of true freedom Rejection assault and withdrawal 4 movements of love.</p>	<p>2. Bible Meditation. Please meditate on Rom. 1:1-7 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
Wk	Date	Topic and Outline	Lesson Outcomes	Assignments
15	12/12	<p>Conclusion, Summary, and Questions and Answers</p> <p>A. Overview of the process of spiritual formation</p> <p>B. Answer any questions related to the course</p> <p>C. Review for the final exam</p>	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will be given the "big picture" regarding the process of spiritual formation and will be able to give a brief explanation of the process.</p> <p>2. Will be reminded of the key concepts related to the spiritual formation and will be able to see the connections between them.</p> <p>3. Will have a good sense of how to prepare for the final exam.</p>	<p>1. Bible Meditation. Please meditate on Rom. 8-14 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
16	12/19	Final Exam		Have a wonderful Christmas!

V. Bibliography

Anderson, Neil T. and Robert L. Saucy. *God's Power at Work In You*. Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 2001.

Bridges, Jerry. *The Disciplines of Grace: God's Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness*. Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress. 1994.

Calhoun, Adele Ahlberg. *Spiritual Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us.* Downers Groves: IL, IVP Press, 2005.

Fee, Gordon D. *Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God.* Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996.

Hafemann, Scott. *The God of Promise and the Life of Faith: Understanding the Heart of the Bible.* Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001.

Ross, David E. *A Table Before Me: A Meditating Christian.* Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2007.

Ryle, J.C. *Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots.* Durham, England: Evangelical Press, 1979.

Williams, Clifford. *Singleness of Heart: Restoring the Divided Soul.* Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1994.

Willard, Dallas and Don Simpson. *Revolution of Character: Discovering Christ's Pattern for Spiritual Transformation.* Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2008.

VI. Assessment

Assignment/Exam	Due Dates	Points
Class Participation	Weekly	10
Weekly Reflections	Weekly	10
Reading and Reflection Papers on the Reading	Per assigned week	20
Journaling – Scripture Meditation	Weekly	15
Personal Development Project	Week 14	15
Final Exam	Week 16	30
Total Course Grade Point		100

APPENDIX 2

EVALUATION OF THE COURSE PROPOSAL

Evaluation

Thank you for your time and effort in evaluating a new course proposal for Handong students. This new course on spiritual formation will be proposed this semester to the Center for Christian Foundations for consideration in the future. (This course is also a part of my Doctor of Ministry Thesis-Project.)

Please evaluate each component of the course as well as the overall course design. Feel free to comment on anything to improve this course.

Score: 1=Poor; 5= Excellent

Components	Score	Comments
I. Course Description	1 2 3 4 5	
II. Course Objectives	1 2 3 4 5	
III. Learning Tools	1 2 3 4 5	
A, Lecture Design	1 2 3 4 5	
	1 2 3 4 5	
	1 2 3 4 5	
	1 2 3 4 5	
	1 2 3 4 5	
IV. Course Outline	1 2 3 4 5	
A. Topic and Outline	1 2 3 4 5	
	1 2 3 4 5	
	1 2 3 4 5	
V. Assessment	1 2 3 4 5	

	A. Grade Breakdown	1 2 3 4 5
	B. Sample Final Exam	1 2 3 4 5
	VI. Bibliography	1 2 3 4 5
	Overall	1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX 3
REVISED COURSE SYLLABUS

Introduction to Christian Spiritual Formation
Fall Semester 2012

Instructor: Pastor Young Ho Hwang
Office: Nehemiah Hall 425
Tel: 054-260-1225
Class Time: Wednesdays, 1:20pm to 3:00pm
Email: pastoryh@handong.edu
HP: 010-5583-1560

I. Mission

HGU

Handong Global University will be the "World Changing Global Christian University" educating twenty-first century leaders for Korea and the world who embody excellence in both academics and Christian moral character, in particular, honesty and integrity.

Center for Christian Foundations

The Mission of the Center for Christian Foundations is to provide a basic knowledge related to Christian faith and worldview necessary for educating leaders who embody excellence in both academics and Christian moral character as stated in the vision of HGU.

II. Course Description

In this course, we will investigate the nature and the process of spiritual formation from Biblical, theological, personal, social, and practical perspectives. The aim of the course is not only to convey information but to engage us so that we can live lives holy and free with God.

This is a short two credit course that is attempting to deal with the topic of formation of the human soul. This course will serve to pique interest, point the way, and introduce a life-long process of "becoming more like our Lord Jesus."

The course is taught with conviction from Christian experience. The Bible is the text that will give us a firm basis for understanding and experiencing the kind of spiritual formation that God has called us to embrace.

This course is an elective course designed for those who seek to understand and to experience a lifestyle of spiritual growth where the relationship with God deepens as the students learn to become more like him from the heart. This course will also help those who seek to have a deeper understanding of the problem, the purpose and the nature of human existence. The course will not only explore who we are, why we exist, and what is wrong with us, but it will also show us how we can begin to be transformed to be authentic and free.

III. Course Objectives

1. Students will be able to clearly articulate the vision of Christian Spiritual Formation.
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge regarding the basic theological framework undergirding Christian Spiritual Formation.
3. Students will understand the overall process of spiritual formation and be able to identify key factors that contribute to its process.
4. Students will have a greater understanding of the proper function and the value of spiritual disciplines and will begin to make appropriate use of them in their individual personal development.
5. Students will develop an increased sense of personal identity and calling, and will have a greater awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.

IV. Learning Tools

1. Lectures.

- There will be 80 minutes of lecture each week covering the topics listed in the course outline.
- Each lecture will end with a time of *personal reflection* during which students can process, organize and write down information concerning insights and personal applications.

Name:

Student ID:

Date:

1. Summary and the flow of today's lecture:

2. Key concepts that I need to understand and to remember:

3. Some ideas that I need to further process:

4. Personal applications:

5. Questions:

2. Required Reading

- The following chapters can be found in the CIS under “Resources.”

Read By	Assigned Reading
Week 2 9/12	David E. Ross, “A Simple Method for Biblical Meditation” and “The Meaning of Meditation” in <i>A Table Before Me: A Meditating Christian</i> (Maitland, FL: Xulon Press, 2007). (22 pages)
Week 3 9/19	Dallas Willard and Don Simpson, “A Revolution Has Begun” in <i>Revolution of Character: Discovering Christ’s Pattern for Spiritual Transformation</i> (Colorado Springs: Navpress, 2008). (14 pages)
Week 4 9/26	Scott Hafemann, “Why Do We Exist?” in <i>The God of Promise and the Life of Faith: Understanding the Heart of the Bible</i> . (Wheaton, IL: Crossway Books, 2001). (18 pages)
Week 5 10/3	J.C. Ryle, “Sin” in <i>Holiness: Its Nature, Hindrances, Difficulties, and Roots</i> . (Durham, England: Evangelical Press, 1979). (14 pages)
Week 6 10/10	Clifford Williams, “Motives Undermining the Singleness of Heart” in <i>Singleness of Heart: Restoring the Divided Soul</i> . (Grand Rapids, Michigan, 1994). (34 pages)
Week 7 10/17	Jerry Bridges, “Preach the Gospel to Yourself” in <i>The Disciplines of Grace: God’s Role and Our Role in the Pursuit of Holiness</i> . (Colorado Springs, Colorado: Navpress, 1994). (16)
Week 8 10/25	Neil T. Anderson and Robert L. Saucy, “Our new freedom in Christ” in <i>God’s Power at Work In You</i> . (Eugene, Oregon: Harvest House, 2001). (8 pages)
Week 9 10/31	Gordon D. Fee, “Conversion: Getting In (Part 2), The Spirit as the Entry Point” in <i>Paul, the Spirit, and the People of God</i> . (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson Publishers, 1996). (13 pages)
Week 10	Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, “Introduction: Discovering Your Desires” in <i>Spiritual</i>

11/7	<i>Disciplines Handbook: Practices That Transform Us.</i> (Downers Groves: IL, IVP Press, 2005). (10 pages)
Week 11 11/14	Adele Ahlberg Calhoun, "Rule for Life" (5 pages)
Week 12 11/21	Dallas Willard and Don Simpson, "The Heart, Center of Our Life" and "The Battle for Our Thought Life" (32 pages)
Week 13 11/28	Dallas Willard and Don Simpson, "Educating Our Feelings" and "The Body, Our Primary Ally" (32 pages)
Week 14 12/5	Dallas Willard and Don Simpson, "Transforming Our Character" and "Changing How We Relate to Others" (30 pages)

- Students are expected to write a short *reflection from the reading* based on the following the format.

Name:
Student ID:
Date:
<p>1. Brief summary/outline of the chapter:</p> <p>2. Highlights: What are some ideas that stood out to you? Why?</p> <p>3. Personal application: How does the reading relate to you personally?</p> <p>4. What are some questions or comments that you have from the reading?</p>

3. Bible Meditation

Daily Bible meditation will be assigned as an integral part of the course. Each day read the selected passages from the Bible and spend 15-30 minutes each day reflecting, praying, and journaling in response.

Reading assignment and other instructions regarding Bible meditation will help you to benefit from this exercise.

Submit (every Monday by noon on CIS board) your meditation assignment from the previous week. Example:

Week 1

	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	Sun
Yes or No	Yes	Ycs	No	Yes	Yes	No	Yes
Time	9:30pm til 9:45pm	7am to 7:30am		7am to 7:30am	7am to 7:30am		1pm to 2pm
Place	My Room	Prayer walk around the school		Chapel	Chapel		Downtown Starbucks
Comment		I realized that God is truly great		I just went through the motion			It was a really good time

4. Personal Development Project

a) Personal History Survey

Students are to write a brief personal history at the beginning of this project. The survey will ask questions related to family background, influential people, significant events, their relationship with God and an area of their lives that they would like to change. As a part of this survey, students are also asked to fill out the “Lifeline Graph,” where they are to indicate the high and low points of their lives.

Name:

Student ID:

Date:

1. What was your childhood like? Please describe your family and your relationship with your family members.
2. Who influenced you the most? In what way?
3. How would you describe your relationship with God?
4. What questions do you have regarding the topic of spiritual formation / personal change?
5. What area of your life do you want to see change/growth in?
6. Life Graph: Please mark the high and low points of your life and your relationship with God. Make notice of the turning points.



b) Personal Interview with Pastor Young Ho

I will meet with each student to go over the personal historical survey. During the interview, I want to dialogue with you regarding the area of change that you would like to experience in your life.

An appropriate spiritual discipline will be assigned specifically to help you. You will need to keep a journal of your spiritual discipline and record its progress throughout the semester. There will be a brief “check-up” in the middle of the semester and a final exit interview.

c) Reflection Paper

- At the end of the course, you will submit a reflection paper regarding your own personal development project.
- The format is as follows:

Name:

Student ID:

Date:

What was the most significant thing you gained through this project?

How would you rate your effort and commitment to the project? (Out of 10; 10 being the best.)

Do you think the spiritual discipline(s) that was suggested to you was appropriate? What did you find difficult about such discipline? What did you find rewarding about it?

What questions or comments do you have regarding your personal growth related to this project and how will you live differently in the future?

5. Developing a Personal Rule of Life

During this course, you will have developed rule of life which is “a pattern of spiritual disciplines that provides structure and direction for growth in holiness.” The aim of the course is not only to communicate information about spiritual formation and the factors that contributes to its growth, but also to help put into practice what you have learned and to instill in you a new way of living responsively to God.

You will be given a chapter to read from Calhoun’s book, *Spiritual Formation Handbook*, which will give practical examples and guidance on how to develop your own rule of life. Various lectures and readings during the course will contribute to your writing your own rule of life.

Sample Rule of Life

Pope John XXIII

Fifteen minutes of silent prayer upon rising in the morning.

Fifteen minutes of spiritual reading.

Before bed, a general examination of conscience followed by confession; then identifying issues for the next morning's prayer.

Dorothy Day

Receive Communion Daily.

Read the Bible daily.

Keep a journal daily.

See Christ in the face of the poor.

Catherine de Hueck Doherty (Founder of Madonna House in Ontario, Canada)

Monthly retreat into silence and solitude for a twenty-four-hour period.

John the HGU Student

Spend 30 minutes each day after lunch in a prayer walk with God.

Once a week, talk with one person I do not know well with no other intention than to bless, to pray (inside) and to serve.

Fast one meal every Monday and secretly give the money to someone in need.

Some questions and comments to guide the writing of the rule of life

1. What are your preferred spiritual disciplines? Why do you prefer them? How helpful

are these disciplines for your spiritual growth?

2. What spiritual disciplines do you shrink from? Why?

Do you think some of the disciplines that you shrink from will nonetheless help you to grow spiritually? Which ones? Why do you think so?

3. Take some time to pray to the Lord regarding your lifestyle and ask the Lord to guide you in developing a rule of life.

4. Make a list of spiritual disciplines that you feel will benefit your relationship with God the most. See to it that your list is balanced between the ones that you prefer and the ones that you shrink from.

5. Please be realistic. A rule of life is not about living an ideal life but about living an actual, transforming life. You can add/modify your rule of life as you grow. You can start with the first 1 or 2 items in your list and go from there.

IV. Course Outline

Wk	Date	Topic and Outline	Lesson Outcomes	Assignments
1	9/5	Introduction to the course <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Course Description B. Learning Outcomes C. Learning tools D. Course Outline E. Assessment and class requirements F. Assignment for next week G. Q&A 	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will become more familiarized with each other and with the instructor.</p> <p>2. Will have a clear understanding of this course with respect to: The course description The course outcome The course learning tools The course outline The course assessment tools The assignment for next week.</p> <p>3. Will be excited about what they will learn and experience in this course and will be motivated to invest in the learning process required by this course.</p> <p>4. Will begin to think thoughts related to spiritual formation and raise personal issues and questions about their own spiritual formation.</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: David E. Ross' "A Simple Method for Biblical Meditation." and "The Meaning of Meditation." (22 pages)</p> <p>2. Complete <i>Personal History Survey</i> (2 weeks for this assignment)</p>
2	9/12	Definitions of Spiritual Formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. What is "Character?" B. Definition of Spiritual Formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Process 2) Of being conformed 3) Into the image of Christ 4) For the sake of God and for others C. Teachings on Bible Meditation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) What is Bible Meditation? 2) Why should we meditate on God's Word? 3) How do we meditate? 	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will have a clear understanding of what human character is.</p> <p>2. Will reflect on the character that they possess now. Will discern what they have become rather than believe in what they imagine themselves to be.</p> <p>3. Will begin to understand the nature of spiritual formation. They will have a: proper goal of spiritual formation proper appreciation of the nature of process proper perspective of our role in the process.</p> <p>4. Will have adequate understanding of the purpose and the basic method of Bible meditation.</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: Dallas Willard and Don Simpson's "A Revolution Has Begun." (14 pages)</p> <p>2. Sign up for a <i>Personal Interview</i> with Pastor Young Ho for your <i>Personal Development Project</i>.</p> <p>3. <i>Bible Meditation</i>. Meditate on Ps.1 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
3	9/19	Vision for Spiritual Formation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> I. Vision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Godliness and Holiness B. The greatest commandment C. Freedom and Happiness D. Solitude – Community-Ministry E. "Gracious relationship of intimacy, dependence, and Lordship of God that results in freedom and holiness" 	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will have clear understanding of the appropriate vision for spiritual formation</p> <p>2. Will recognize and reject wrong/inadequate visions for spiritual formation.</p> <p>3. Will be able to understand and explain these key concepts: Godliness Holiness</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: Scott Hafemann's "Why Do We Exist?" (18 pages)</p> <p>2. Sign up for <i>Personal Interview</i> with Pastor Young Ho for <i>Personal Development Project</i>.</p>

		<p>H. Comments</p> <p>A. The vision has to come from God.</p> <p>B. Spiritual formation has to do with the heart.</p> <p>C. Spiritual formation must shape the whole person.</p> <p>D. The vision is for the characteristic, lasting change.</p> <p>E. The vision is relational at the core.</p>	<p>Freedom</p> <p>Happiness</p> <p>Heart – whole person – inner change</p> <p>Characteristic</p> <p>Intimacy</p> <p>Dependence</p> <p>Lordship</p> <p>Relationship God.</p>	<p><i>3. Personal History Survey</i> is DUE TODAY.</p> <p><i>4. Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Ps. 139: 1-7 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
Wk	Date	Topic and Outline	Lesson Outcomes	Assignments
4	9/26	<p>Theological Foundations for Spiritual Formation 1: Creation</p> <p>A. Supremacy of God</p> <p>B. Place of Humanity</p> <p>C. Doctrine of Creation Provides a Basis for Understanding Humanity</p> <p>D. Implications for Spiritual Formation</p>	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will begin to have a God-centered orientation towards all of life, including their self-understanding.</p> <p>2. Will have a clear understanding of the place, dignity and the purpose of human life.</p> <p>3. Will appreciate the value of the doctrine of creation as a basis for understanding of whole of human life.</p> <p>4. Students will be able to understand and explain these key concepts: Absolute greatness and goodness of God The glory of Humanity Image of God Kingdom of God.</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: J.C. Ryle's "Sin." (14 pages)</p> <p><i>2. Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Ps. 139:8-14 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
5	10/3	<p>Theological Foundation for Spiritual Formation 2: The Fall</p> <p>A. The Shape of Sin</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Did God really Say? 2) You will not surely Die. 3) God is not to be trusted as God <p>B. The Results of Sin</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Eyes Opened 2) Shame 3) Judgment <p>C. The Nature of Sin</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Definition of Sin 2) The Source of Sin 3) The Extent of Sin 4) Offensiveness of Sin 5) The Dilemma of Sin 6) The Deceit of Sin 	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will be able to articulate the heart of all Sin and how this leads to all kinds of expressions of sins.</p> <p>2. Will be able to identify how temptation works and will begin to develop a strategy to resist it.</p> <p>3. Will better understand their own sinful condition and will begin to appreciate the help that God provides.</p> <p>4. Will be able to explain the following key concepts: Independence as the heart of sin Temptation comes through deception We sin because we are sinners Shattered image of God Total depravity The sin beneath all sins.</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: Clifford Williams' "Motives Undermining the Singleness of Heart." (34 pages)</p> <p><i>2. Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Ps. 139:14-21 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>

6	10/10	Further Exploration into Human Sinful Condition A. Our Thirst B. Our Dividedness 1) Ambivalence 2) Illusion 3) Resistance 4) Indifference 5) Compulsive C. Underlying Barriers 1) Desire for reward 2) Fear of disapproval 3) Self-justification 4) Comparison 5) Self-congratulation 6) Impulse to live outside ourselves 7) Imagination 8) Busyness	Students... 1. Will be able to appreciate the complex and diverse manifestation of human sinfulness 2. Will have insights into the sinful and divided condition of the human heart. 3. Will be able to identify and recognize the “underlying barriers” in their own lives. 4. Will be able to explain these key concepts: Idolatry Compulsive existence Basic need for significance, security and satisfaction Singleness of the heart.	1. Read and write reflections on: Jerry Bridges’ “Preach the Gospel to Yourself.” (16 pages) 2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Ps. 139:22-24 and John 15:1-4 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.
Wk	Date	Topic and Outline	Lesson Outcomes	Assignments
7	10/17	Theological Foundations for Spiritual Formation 3: Salvation in Christ A. Atonement 1) Sacrifice 2) Propitiation 3) Reconciliation 4) Redemption B. Regeneration C. Justification D. Adoption	Students... Students... 1. Will be able understand and articulate the Christian gospel message. 2. Will be able to explain these terms and be able to explain their significance: Atonement Sacrifice Propitiation Reconciliation Redemption Regeneration Justification Adoption. 3. Will be moved in their hearts by hearing the message of the cross of Jesus.	1. Read and write reflections on: Neil T. Anderson and Robert L. Saucy’s “Our new freedom in Christ.” (8 pages) 2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on John 15:5-11 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.
8	10/24	Living out salvation in Christ: The Normal Christian Life 1. A. Vocation: Understanding the three callings upon your life B. A gracious relationship with God characterized by intimacy, dependence, and Lordship that results in freedom and holiness. Relationship Of Intimacy Dependence Lordship of God That results in Freedom And Holiness	Students... 1. Will be clear about their basic calling in life. 2. Will have a Biblical perspective on work, rest and worship. 3. Will be able to explain the normal Christian life using the following key concepts: Gracious Relationship Intimacy Dependence Lordship Results. Freedom	1. Read and write reflections on: Gordon D. Fee’s “Conversion: Getting In (Part 2): The Spirit as the Entry Point.” (13 pages) 2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on John 15:12-18 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.

			Holiness	
Wk	Date	Topic and Outline	Lesson Outcomes	Assignments
9	10/31	<p>The Normal Christian Life 2: Life of Grace</p> <p>A. Salvation in Three Tenses 1) Past 2) Present 3) Future</p> <p>B. Life of Grace 1) Meaning of grace 2) Knowing the grace that is ours 3) How to remain in the grace 4) God's role and our role 5) John 15</p> <p>C. Life in the Spirit 1) The Person of the Holy Spirit 2) His role in salvation: past, present, and future 3) His role in our spiritual formation</p>	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will know what they already have in Christ and begin to understand the implications of their identity in Christ.</p> <p>2. Will have an understanding of the future grace for the people of God and begin to shape their current outlook towards life.</p> <p>3. Will be able to articulate the meaning and power of God's grace.</p> <p>4. Will be able to explain the life of grace using these key concepts: Middle voice Remaining in Christ Persons vs. Individuals Role of human response Legalism vs. training in grace Christian's relationship to the law of God. Intention and commitment Spirit-filled life</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: Adele Ahlberg Calhoun's "Introduction: Discovering Your Desires." (10 pages)</p> <p>2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Eph. 2:1-7 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
10	11/7	<p>Understanding Spiritual Disciplines</p> <p>A. Grace and the Disciplines</p> <p>B. Definition of Spiritual Disciplines</p> <p>C. Aim of Spiritual Disciplines</p> <p>D. Practicing Spiritual Disciplines</p> <p>E. Necessity of Spiritual Disciplines</p>	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will be able to articulate the relationship between grace and the spiritual disciplines.</p> <p>2. Will be able to define the spiritual disciplines and to demonstrate how they function to contribute to spiritual growth.</p> <p>3. Will be able to describe the role and the limitations of the spiritual disciplines.</p> <p>4. Will be able to defend the necessity of the spiritual disciplines in the process of spiritual formation.</p> <p>5. Will be able to explain the nature of the spiritual disciplines using the following key concepts: "Training off the spot" "Making space" for God Making the supernatural natural Imitation of the entire life of Christ</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: Adele Ahlberg Calhoun's "Rule for Life." (5 pages)</p> <p>2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Eph. 2:9-10; 4:1-5 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
11	11/14	<p>Survey of Disciplines</p> <p>A. Some classic/basic Disciplines 1) Bible Meditation 2) Solitude 3) Silence 4) Prayer 5) Community</p> <p>B. Other Disciplines 1) Disciplines of Abstinence 2) Disciplines of Engagements</p>	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will have some basic understanding of classic disciplines and will be able to adopt them into their lives.</p> <p>2. Will be introduced to a wide range of spiritual disciplines.</p> <p>3. Will further understand how spiritual disciplines function in their lives and will begin to make personalized list of</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: Dallas Willard and Don Simpson's "The Heart, Center of Our Life." and "The Battle for Our Thought Life." (32 pages)</p> <p>2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Ps.</p>

		C. Forming the Rule of Life	<p>disciplines for themselves.</p> <p>4. Will understand the value of the rule of life and will be given examples and guidelines for developing their own rules of life.</p>	23 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.
Wk	Date	Topic and Outline	Lesson Outcomes	Assignments
12	11/21	Human System Overview and Understanding the Human Mind <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Human System Overview B. Human Mind <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Ideas 2) Images 3) Information 4) Thinking 5) Vision of loving God with our mind 	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will be able to see the human system as a whole and will recognize that true spiritual formation must impact the whole system.</p> <p>2. Will be able to describe some connections between different parts of the human system.</p> <p>3. Will be able to describe the human mind using the following terms: Ideas Images Information Thinking</p> <p>4. Will have an understanding of how we can and must be transformed with regards to our mind.</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: Dallas Willard and Don Simpson's "Educating Our Feelings." and "The Body, Our Primary Ally." (32 pages)</p> <p>2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Ps.19:1-7 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
13	11/28	Understanding Human Emotion and Body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A. Understanding Human Emotion <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Power of Feelings 2) No direct mastery of our feelings 3) The vision for our feelings 4) Importance of feelings 5) Need to understand our feelings B. Understanding the Body <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 1) How the body works 2) What is the body for? 3) Transformation of the body 	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will be able to appreciate the power, value and proper role of human emotion.</p> <p>2. Will be able identify the wrong ways of responding to emotions and know how to approach emotions in a right way.</p> <p>3. Will be able to appreciate the power, value and the proper role of the human body.</p> <p>4. Will be able identify the wrong ways of responding to the human body and know how to approach the body in a right way.</p> <p>5. Will be able to explain the proper function of human emotion and body using the following key concepts: Conditions underlying the emotions Listen, understand and lead emotions Body as a gift of God Automatic responses of the body Training of the body</p>	<p>1. Read and write reflections on: Dallas Willard and Don Simpson's "Transforming Our Character." and "Changing How We Relate to Others." (32 pages)</p> <p>2. <i>Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Ps.19:8-14 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
14	12/5	Understanding Human Will and Social Relationships	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will be able to explain the relationship</p>	<p>1. <i>Personal Development Project Paper</i> is DUE</p>

		<p>A. Understanding Human Will</p> <p>1)The design of the will 2) Mind and the will 3)The goal of the will 4)The problems with the will 5)The transformation of the will</p> <p>B. Understanding Social Relationship</p> <p>1) Spiritual Formation is necessarily social 2) Reality of Sin in Relationships 3) Circle of Sufficiency</p>	<p>between the will, mind and body.</p> <p>2. Will recognize the proper place and the role of the human will.</p> <p>3. Will be able to discern the problems that exist in human will.</p> <p>4. Will be able to articulate the process of transformation of the will</p> <p>5. Will be convinced that true spiritual formation is relational and must impact our social network.</p> <p>6. Will have a deeper insight into the evil that exists in our relationships.</p> <p>7. Will begin to understand how God's grace impacts our relationships.</p> <p>8. Will be able to explain the transformation of the will and social relationships using the following key concepts: Surrender, abandonment, contentment, and participation Will-less, Willful and willing Our free will and God's free will Meaning of true freedom Rejection assault and withdrawal 4 movements of love.</p>	<p>TODAY.</p> <p><i>2. Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Rom. 1:1-7 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
Wk	Date	Topic and Outline	Lesson Outcomes	Assignments
15	12/12	<p>Conclusion, Summary, and Questions and Answers</p> <p>A. Overview of the process of spiritual formation</p> <p>B. Answer any questions related to the course</p> <p>C. Review for the final exam</p>	<p>Students...</p> <p>1. Will be given the "big picture" regarding the process of spiritual formation and will be able to give a brief explanation of the process.</p> <p>2. Will be reminded of the key concepts related to the spiritual formation and will be able to see the connections between them.</p> <p>3. Will have a good sense of how to prepare for the final exam.</p>	<p><i>1. Bible Meditation.</i> Please meditate on Rom. 8:14 this week, one verse a day. Record your meditation from last week on the CIS.</p>
16	12/19	Final Exam		Have a wonderful Christmas!

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Required Reading

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Willard, Dallas. *The Spirit of the Disciplines: Understanding How God Changes Lives*. New York, NY: HarperCollins Publishing, 1998.

VI. Assessment

Course Objectives and the Learning Tools

Course Objectives	Course Learning Tools
1. Students will be able to clearly articulate the vision of Christian Spiritual Formation.	1. Lectures 3 and 2, 8, 9, 12-15 2. Reading associated with the lectures 3. Personal Development Project
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge regarding the basic theological framework undergirding Christian Spiritual Formation.	1. Lectures 4-9 2. Readings associated with the lectures
3. Students will understand the overall process of spiritual formation and be able to identify key factors that contribute to its process.	1. All of the lectures, especially 8-9 2. Readings associated with the lectures 3. Bible Meditation 4. Personal Development Project 5. Rule of Life
4. Students will have a greater understanding of the proper function and the value of spiritual disciplines and will begin to make appropriate use of them in their individual personal development.	1. Lectures 2, 10 and 11 2. Readings associated with the lectures 3. Personal Development Project 4. Rule of Life
5. Students will develop an increased sense of personal identity and calling, and will have a greater awareness of their own strengths and weaknesses.	1. Lectures 4-6, 8, and 11 2. Readings associated with the lectures 3. Bible Meditations 4. Personal Development Project 5. Rule of Life

Assignment/Exam	Due Dates	Points
Class Participation	Weekly	10
Weekly Reflections	Weekly	10
Reading and Reflection Papers on the Reading	Per assigned week	20
Journaling – Scripture Meditation	Weekly	15
Personal Development Project	Week 14	15
Final Exam	Week 16	30
Total Course Grade Point		100

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VITA

The author of this work is Young Ho Hwang. He was born in South Korea in February 24, 1971. When he was eight years old, he and his family moved to New York City where he graduated from Stuyvesant High School. It was during the junior high and high school years that he, through the youth ministry of his church, encountered Christ and grew in the faith.

In 1993, after graduating from Johns Hopkins University with a B.A. in Psychology, Young Ho moved to Vancouver, Canada to study at Regent College. While there, Young Ho planted and pastored a multicultural church, "Immanuel Fellowship," with the support and blessing of the Korean Baptist Church of Vancouver. He then graduated with a M.Div. in 1996 and was ordained in 1999 by the Southern Baptist Convention.

Shortly after marrying in 2000, Young Ho and his wife, Min Kim, moved to New York to co-pastor a young church called "New Joy Fellowship." During those years, Young Ho also taught courses on Youth Ministry at Evangel Theological Seminary in New York City. In 2003, Young Ho and Min received a call to minister to students at Handong Global University in Pohang, South Korea. Young Ho has served as an International Chaplain from 2003 to 2006 and then as the Head Chaplain from 2006 to 2012. In June of 2005, he began his work in the D.Min. program at Gordon Conwell Theological Seminary and is now expecting to graduate in May of 2012.

Currently, he enjoys serving Handong Global University's students and the international faculty families among whom he and his family live. Young Ho and Min are also blessed with the stewardship of three beautiful children - Elia, Luke Josiah, and Sarina Grace.